

# Phylogeny

Darwin deserves credit for the theory of natural selection, but the concept of phylogeny is the null hypothesis and thus a no-brainer. As observed in an earlier essay, phylogeny is the correct presumption regardless of the mechanism used to explain it. If natural selection is an unsatisfactory explanation, then let phylogeny be explained by something else. If creationists have issues with Darwin, then let them criticize Hennig and Kauffman.

Darwin's cardinal insight was the recognition of recursive environmental feedback. As cited in a previous essay, Daniel Dennett notes in *Darwin's Dangerous Idea* that Paley asserted that the observed order in nature required intelligent design. Darwin then demonstrated that consciousness is not necessary for an intelligent design process. Adaptation can emerge and accumulate even without the help of foresight. There exists a creationist t-shirt that reads, "By Design and Not By Chance," as if this were controversial. Actually, and apparently unbeknownst to creationists, there is no significant Darwinian dispute about this.

In accordance with the second law of thermodynamics, species spontaneously decay into fragments incapable of mutual genetic communication. The resulting reproductively isolated sibling species are free to adapt independently. The resulting adaptations will be natural reactions to natural forces, like falling downhill, or the mutual forces of attraction and repulsion of magnetic poles. However, they will not necessarily be the best possible solutions under the circumstances because, as noted in a previous essay, complex systems are easily trapped in suboptimal modes (see Waldrop).

Adaptation relies heavily on plagiarism and recruitment, such that the wheel need not always be reinvented. In the lineage immediately ancestral to birds, feathers are thought to have arisen prior to the emergence of flight as integumentary appendages derived from keratinocytes, and were initially selected for "insulation, water repellency, courtship, camouflage and defense" according to Richard O. Prum and Alan H. Brush (*Scientific American*, March 2003). They were later exapted for flight. Cryptochromes are light-sensitive proteins that could have been recruited in the early evolution of the eye. Noting that the skull seems to be derived from teeth, Neil Shubin, in *Your Inner Fish*, observes that 500 million years ago, ostracoderms had a bony head plate "made up of thousands of small teeth fused together."

Adaptation can be most easily accomplished via the loss of an existing trait, yielding evolutionarily derived simplification. Webbed digits are easily achieved via failed apoptosis (programmed cell death) during development, which would normally separate digits. In an example of neoteny, the adult human skull resembles that of a juvenile ape, humans having lost the alveolar prognathism characteristic of adult apes.

Vicariance biogeography exploits the dynamic geology of plate tectonics to help explain allopatry. Populations can become separated involuntarily if the ground moves beneath them. Thus the fragmentation of biological species can be facilitated by parallel geological phenomena.

This writer has found the following sources to be useful:

Brooks, D.R. and E.O. Wiley. *Evolution as Entropy: Toward a Unified Theory of Biology*. The University of Chicago Press, 1986. ISBN 0-226-07581-8.

- Kauffman, Stuart A.. *The Origins of Order: Self-Organization and Selection in Evolution*. Oxford Uni. Press, 1993. ISBN 0-19-507951-5.
- Weber, B.H., D.J. Depew, and J.D. Smith, eds. *Entropy, Information, and Evolution: New Perspectives on Physical and Biological Evolution*. The MIT Press, 1988. ISBN 0-262-23132-8.
- Wiley, E.O.. *Phylogenetics: The Theory and Practice of Phylogenetic Systematics*. John Wiley & Sons, 1981. ISBN 0-471-05975-7.

## Creationism

Creationism is a denial of phylogeny, even though any exception made to common descent weakens an explanation relative to a strictly phylogenetic one. Consider a cladogram with the origin for a certain character at its base. The dendricity of the cladograms allows distribution of a character to descendant via inheritance. This allows for basal (and therefore quantitatively minimal) character origins. Synapomorphy, then, is the property that allows cladograms to be optimized such that they represent the least falsified genealogy, and that allows phylogenetic theories to falsify typical creation theories. Nondendritic creationist models cannot accommodate this logical simplification because a negative heuristic protects core assumptions from modification and improvement (*mole ruit sua*). To accommodate creationism, all the nodes of a cladogram must be erased, forcing a basal character origin to divide and climb up the tree in advance of this erasure until the character has been incorporated into all the terminal branches, becoming redundant autapomorphies. The result is *not even* an unresolved polychotomy. Quantitatively, all diagnostics, such as consistency index and F-ratio, characterize the phylogenetic perspective as vastly more parsimonious (*facile princeps*). Qualitatively, esoteric speculation are similarly better done without. Thus creationism is fatally hobbled by ideological constraints, resulting in the victory of phylogeny being a horizon job (*jucundi acti labores*). As Ricky Roma says in *Glengarry Glen Ross*, “[Expletive deleted]. You owe me the car.” This is the fundamental pitfall of all creationist arguments *in nuce*.

A creationist bumper sticker reads: “There’s no monkey in my family tree.” If so, then said tree has less explanatory utility and is less parsimonious than that offered by science, making the latter better. Therefore, science wins and its dust may be freely eaten. Or, as they say at the University of Southern California, “*Palmam qui meruit ferat*.”

Ontogeny and phylogeny (or, if one prefers, development and evolution) respectively involve the differentiation of cells and species. Organisms ontogenetically develop, while species phylogenetically evolve. Creationists somehow manage to deny phylogeny but not ontogeny. They amusingly do not believe that all terrestrial organisms evolved from a common organismal ancestor over a period of several billion years, yet they somehow manage to believe that they themselves were recently unicellular, their bodies having developed from a single common cellular ancestor in just decades. Pastor Michael Jones has said, “I could never believe we come from goo.” He is obviously speaking phylogenetically, though he almost certainly believes it ontogenetically.

Ken Ham of Answers in Genesis says of a picture of a chimpanzee, “Did your grandmother look like this?” and also employs a graphic depicting an embryo labeled “Domestic cat” that bears no resemblance to an adult cat. If Ham does not believe that humans and chimps share a common ancestor that lived millions of years ago, then how can he allow himself to

believe that an adult cat could develop from something that it does not resemble? Ironically, creationists acknowledge that they themselves once not only looked like but actually *were* zygotes. So, why not disbelieve intraspecific genealogy? Let DNA tests not be accepted for paternity if they are not accepted for phylogeny.

There are said to be weaknesses in evolutionary theory, which is inevitably and trivially true of all theory and thus an accent fallacy. Darwinian theory is said to have “gaps,” and yet biology survives them, being no more endangered by them than by the “gaps” in Newtonian physics. Creationists call evolution a “questionable” assertion, as if to question were to impugn, which it is not, as interrogatives lack truth value. All synthetic propositions are necessarily contingent and all history is necessarily conjectural. But some conjectures yield better explanations than others. And, by definition, the supernatural is the inscrutable realm from which answers are unavailable. So, in addition to being questionable, natural explanations, unlike their supernatural rivals, are answerable. This is the Radio Shack Principle: questions are no problem for those who have answers, especially the best ones. Let all question, but let no one misanswer.

As noted previously, some creationists claim that evolutionary theories leave them unmoved, though movement is not a valid evaluative criterion, and creationists should not be forgiven for thinking that it is. Nor is apathy a virtue in itself. There are many people, according to one commentator, for whom space exploration “has no meaning or value,” though it may be confidently assumed to have just as little meaning to just as many dogs. The value of science is not based on an *argumentum ad populum*, nor is scientific truth subject to focus groups.

“Of all lies, art is the least untrue,” observes Gustave Flaubert. Science, though it employs explanatory fictions, is not a lie because, unlike much religion, it acknowledges its fictitious aspects. A distinction is to be made between fiction that is scientifically enabling and that which is merely emotionally enabling but otherwise destitute of explanatory utility. Though creationism may be of some historical interest and may be a potent self-esteem generator among the blissfully unaware, it is nonetheless a theory of the most extraordinary scientific inconsequence.

The null hypothesis is not a claim that a drug, for example, is not effective, only that the alternative hypothesis bears the burden of proof. Failure to recognize this is the *argumentum ad ignorantiam*. In the absence of testability, the most parsimonious proposition stands uncontroversially presupposed.

G.K. Chesterton says, “It is absurd for the Evolutionist to complain that it is unthinkable for an admittedly unthinkable God to make everything out of nothing, and then pretend that it is more thinkable that nothing should turn itself into everything.” Thinkable or not, thanks to quantum mechanics, it is not absurd, and there is no need to pretend. What is absurd is the suggestion that “an admittedly unthinkable God” has met His burden of proof and provided grounds for rejecting the null hypothesis.

Invalid arguments can yield true conclusions. However, one seeks not merely true conclusions but valid and sound arguments. Bragging rights are not earned by accident. As Luc de Clapiers, Marquis de Vauvenargues puts it, “Consciousness of our strength increases it.” Being logically useless, fallacies can serve only the sociological function of highlighting those people stupid enough to accept them. Scientists are (statistically, if not quite tautologically) better than that. Creationists are not merely satisfied with the commission of fallacies, they depend critically on them. When admitting some shortcoming of their own, they are quick to

commit the *tu quoque* fallacy by asserting that science is just as bad, though science seldom is. Embracing the *argumentum ad ignorantiam*, it is as if they falsely believed that there exists some valid stance of agnostic uncertainty prior to the finding of criminal guilt, as if presumptions of criminal innocence and of guilt were equally valid *a priori*. They are not. Criminal innocence requires no proof, while guilt does. Holding such presumptions to be arbitrary makes one unfit for jury duty, much less science. Similarly, one is unfit for golf if it is not intuitively obvious why the low score, not the high score, wins. Where, then, is the crusade to abolish the presumption of criminal innocence? It is as if creationists were smart enough to recognize the propriety of such a presumption in the criminal justice system but too cowardly to apply it universally.

Many conservatives routinely fail to appreciate the fundamental logic of the presumption of criminal innocence, seeing it as merely arbitrary, contingent, liberal, altruistic pampering of the criminally accused. For all their whining, they seem not to notice that in practice the presumption of criminal innocence does not preclude conviction. Prosecutors do not find this an insurmountable burden, yet creationists seem to lack the courage to accept its logic, or in other words, too cowardly to accept the impartial judgment of arithmetic. Some assert that creationism cannot be shown to be untrue. It can certainly be shown to bear the burden of proof, and to be explanatorily inferior.

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Creationists say that dogs remain dogs even though artificial selection would have been expected to have transformed some into something else. Phylogenetics does not assert that any such thing *ever* happens. As phylogenesis proceeds, progressively lower taxa emerge within a group as it diversifies. This results in the sequential occupation of progressively lower taxa by the species in a lineage. No alienation of ancestral affiliation is postulated. Organisms never stop being what their ancestors were. When certain eukaryotes gave rise to animals, those descendants did not stop being eukaryotes. When vertebrates emerged from animals, they did not stop being animals. When tetrapods emerged from vertebrates, they did not stop being vertebrates. When mammals emerged from tetrapods, they did not stop being tetrapods. When dogs emerged from mammals, they did not stop being mammals. If some dogs give rise to a new species, then those descendants, in the phylogenetic sense, will not have stopped being dogs. The elephant man says, “I am not an animal.” This is a literal falsehood. He is not *merely* an animal, but is additionally other things as well. Likewise, Ken Ham says, “We are not just an animal.” Actually, “we” are several. More to the point, you are a human *and* a primate *and* a mammal *and* a tetrapod *and* a vertebrate *and* a chordate *and* an animal *and* a eukaryote. The higher taxa are what your ancestors were and you still are. Tetrapods stopped being fish and apes stopped being monkeys and humans stopped being apes only because the ancestral groups are paraphyletically defined.

Creationists also claim that organisms reproduce after their own kind. They observe that a cat never gave birth to a dog (or vice versa) and take this as a fallacy of the excluded or undistributed middle asserted by some hypothetical, straw-man scientist. Even ignoring the fact that biological taxa are individuals rather than natural kinds, this could still be seen as true within the phylogenetic perspective, but in a hierarchical sense. Sister taxa are derived from higher taxa, not from one another. One does not descend from one’s cousins. Nor do one’s siblings derive from one’s cousins. Yet, even creationists consider themselves genealogically related to their cousins. An animal never gave birth to anything except an animal. A vertebrate never gave birth to anything except a vertebrate. A tetrapod never gave birth to anything except a tetrapod. A

mammal never gave birth to anything except a mammal. And, in this phylogenetic sense, a dog will never give birth to anything except a dog. Even if a dog did give birth to an organism that was phenetically diagnosed as a cat, that cat, by phylogenetic definition, would still be a dog every bit as much as it would still be an animal and a vertebrate and a tetrapod and a mammal.

Brooks and Wiley write the following on the principle of individuality:

Entities that evolve must exhibit spatiotemporal continuity and some intrinsic boundary conditions. In short, they must be individualized (Ghiselin 1974; Hull 1976). We noted earlier that Goldschmidt (1952), Hennig (1966), and Riedl (1978) recognized that any irreversible process operating on discrete, or individualized, entities produces a hierarchy. If we have a hierarchy, there must be individualized components of the process responsible for its existence. This means that genealogical origins are an essential part of any species along with a unique historical burden of inherited information.

That one cannot get feathers from a dog is no more noteworthy than the inability to get insulin from neurons. These facts remain perfectly consistent with the notions of common organismal and cellular ancestry, respectively. And, of course, Kollar and Fisher demonstrated in their 1980 *Science* paper “Tooth Induction in Chick Epithelium: Expression of Quiescent Genes for Enamel Synthesis” that teeth can indeed be coaxed from a hen. For more on the significance of initial conditions and irreversibility, see:

Wiley, E.O. and Daniel R. Brooks (1982). *Victims of History – a Nonequilibrium approach to Evolution*. Syst. Zool. 31(1):1.

Some creationists make partial concessions to phylogeny by allowing for “kinds” above the species level, such that there are fewer “kinds” than species, and allowing for some evolution within them. But in order to avoid conceding totally to evolutionists, they never allow for as few clades at higher taxonomic levels as in phylogenetic models. This keeps all creationist models arithmetically worse, though some creationists seem not to recognize the relative values of numbers. Of course, evolution’s logical superiority must yield to actual history, which would be observable by means of a time machine. With no such thing available, creationists try to substitute the Bible, claiming it to be an eyewitness account, though it is merely talk, which is cheap, and does not physically transport the observer into the actual past.

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On answersingenesis.com, it is said that “the fossil record should look like a phylogenetic tree with a single basic type of life at the bottom, radiating into many basic types as we move up towards the surface fossils. Contrary to evolutionary expectations, all phyla are present in Cambrian rocks.” Consistent with evolutionary expectations, not all phyla are present in *pre-Cambrian* rocks. And, contrary to creationist expectations, Cambrian rocks do not contain all classes, orders, families, genera and species. There are now far more species than phyla. It is the emergence of lower taxa that constitutes radiation, as does the emergence of Cambrian phyla from pre-Cambrian. Higher taxa obviously emerge less frequently than lower ones. It is because taxa are ordered hierarchically, as if phylogenesis had happened, that phylogenetic trees can be constructed at all. Also, the Cambrian period does not represent a geological instant, as it is

thought to have spanned dozens of millions of years. To further complicate matters, Gordon Love reported in 2009 data suggesting that sponges may have emerged 100 million years earlier than previously thought.

Creationists contend that if Darwinism is true, then transitional forms should be found in the fossil record. Regardless of whether Darwinian mechanisms operate in nature, and regardless of what is found in the fossil record, if phylogeny is an actual phenomenon, then characters would be distributed among extant organisms in patterns that could be interpreted as being hierarchical. Such is the case, making possible cladogrammatic analysis. This structure of nature allowed Carolus Linnaeus successfully to create a nested hierarchical taxonomy. Phylogeny is the best explanation for this hierarchical distribution of biological characters.

Creationists assert that the current fossil record is devoid of transitional forms, as if there were something magical about the calendar such that they *would* have been revealed *by now*. In the Michael Ramirez cartoon of 8/14/05, as President Bush works on a jigsaw puzzle labeled “Iraq Democracy: 1 billion pieces,” a child says, “You’re still not done yet?” Let not impatience cause conservatives to be any more tolerant of timetables for withdrawal in science than in military endeavors.

Gaps in the fossil record are gaps merely in gross morphology, wherein large differences can result from minor alternations in genetic regulation with trivial or no change in structural genes. Musical repeats can be accomplished without the writing or copying of the repeated material, just a signal to repeat. The same can occur in genetics. As to gaps on the molecular level, not every known species has had its genome sequenced *yet*. Also, much transitional morphology not found in the fossil record may still be exhibited during ontogeny.

The absence of particular intermediate forms in the fossil record does not count against homeotic mutations, which are observable today. These include such things as fruit flies with legs growing from their heads. Saltational transitions resulting from homeotic mutations produce no intermediates. A headline in the *Los Angeles Times*, 8/4/07, reads, “Researchers give jellyfish extra heads.” “The research, published in the open-access journal PLoS ONE, showed that knocking out just a gene or two could drastically affect an animal’s anatomy. . . . The 1-millimeter-long jellyfish . . . did not appear to suffer any hardship due to the extra body parts.”

Creationists sometimes argue against the plausibility of intermediate forms by asking, “What good is half a wing?” If half a wing is of no use, then one twentieth of a wing should be of even less use, yet this is exactly what the Kiwi has. If nature would not create one twentieth of a wing, then let creationists say why God would.

In certain systems, stress accumulates and is dissipated discontinuously and episodically, as with avalanches and earthquakes. In such cases, changes tend to occur on all scales, but following a power law, such that large changes occur less frequently. Like sand or snow respectively accumulating prior to a landslide or avalanche, a genetic system may accumulate mutations as input, perhaps even at a constant rate, and then be driven to criticality even without selection, giving rise to punctuated equilibrium. During periods of transition, incipient species would be expected to consist of marginal populations that would be small (and thus improbably fossilized) until they stabilize, invade new territory and outcompete their rivals. Thus is the fossil record expected to be discontinuous. And even those distracted by missing links still somehow manage to grasp the narrative continuity of movies in spite of mediation by cinematic images being discontinuously altered 24 times per second.

Fossils are not necessary to establish the presupposition of evolution. They serve to establish certain specifics of history and as one of the four means by which plesiomorphic/

apomorphic polarity is established in an evolutionary transformation series. If no fossils existed, cladistic hierarchical patterns in extant biota would allow phylogenetic inferences and explanations.

Consider the rapidity with which the transition from wolf to protodog is hypothesized to have occurred. The following is part of a transcript (posted on pbs.org) of a show on this topic:

**NARRATOR:** Was it the lure of our leftovers that ushered in the era of animal domestication, or was it a matter of puppy love? Either way, what's critical is that tamer than average individuals somehow gain an advantage and become more likely to breed.

Of course, that leaves unanswered another problem. Many dogs have floppy ears, tails that turn up and curl, patchy coats of many colors. These aren't things you see on wolves, which makes sense because none of them would help a wolf survive in the wild. It's been suggested that humans consciously bred for these traits. Ray Coppinger thinks that's more nonsense.

**RAY COPPINGER:** What do you do? Do you start selecting for a tail? You know – each generation of tail is going up inch by inch until it gets to the top. And while the tail is going up the ears are coming down centimeter by centimeter until they're floppy ears, you know, and so on. From a genetic point of view, I've got to have a mechanism, I've got to have something there, and believe it or not, for forever it's been a mystery.

**NARRATOR:** Traits like coat color, or the way a dog carries its ears or tail, are determined by its genes. Genes are pieces of DNA, and they often come in subtly different versions. Every dog gets one copy of every gene from mom and one from dad. These genes can be mixed and matched in countless ways, but if the parents don't have it, the pup can't get it.

And that's what makes curly tails and patchy coats in dogs so mysterious. Wolves don't have them. It took a remarkable experiment in a most unlikely place, to solve this mystery. The place was the middle of nowhere, Siberia. And the experimenter was an out-of-favor Russian geneticist named Dmitri Belyaev.

Local fox farmers had asked Belyaev for help in breeding a less vicious animal. Belyaev began with the tamest foxes he could find. From their offspring, and for many generations thereafter, he chose only the tamest for breeding. He'd expected that each new generation would be a little less vicious, a little more tame. But by the tenth generation, he was seeing things he'd never expected.

**RAY COPPINGER:** All of a sudden his fox ears started down, his fox tails started up, they started to bark, which is not characteristic of foxes. They started to have different coats, all these little features that you can't imagine being in the wild type. I mean it's not a matter of selecting for, because they're not there to be selected for – that variation isn't there.

**NARRATOR:** What does tameness have to do with ears, and barking and coat color? Belyaev and his colleagues immediately went looking for an explanation. They checked the foxes' adrenaline levels – that's the hormone that controls the "fight or flight" response – and they found they were far lower than normal.

**RAY COPPINGER:** That would explain the tameness, they're just not afraid because they're not producing as much adrenaline. But where does the multi-colored coat come from? And somebody says right off the bat, "Hey, adrenaline's on a biochemical pathway

that also goes to melanin, also has something to do with the animal's coat color." So there's a correlation between coat color now and the adrenal gland.

**NARRATOR:** Suddenly, it all started to make sense. As Belyaev bred his foxes for tameness, over the generations their bodies began producing different levels of a whole range of hormones. These hormones, in turn, set off a cascade of changes that somehow triggered a surprising degree of genetic variation.

**JAMES SERPELL:** Just the simple act of selecting for tameness destabilized the genetic make up of these animals in such a way that all sorts of stuff that you would never normally see in a wild population suddenly appeared.

**NARRATOR:** Most dog biologists now believe something very similar to what happened to these foxes also happened to a population of wolves more than 10,000 years ago. And the rest, as they say, is history: the world's first domestic animal.

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As yet another example of how gifted creationists are at inventing illusory discrepancies, they find it significant that lava known to have erupted and solidified only a few decades ago is dated as millions of years old by Potassium/Argon. This poses no problem for scientists, who are simply not stupid enough to misapply tests or misinterpret their results. Scientists recognize that the cited result may well be within the limits of precision of the technique. In CCD photon counting, random noise is proportional to the square root of the number of photons collected. The signal emerges gradually from the noise. Uncertainty is initially huge, but drops as counts accumulate and the signal/noise ratio increases. Similarly, insufficient time has elapsed for the emergence of a statistically significant difference between the known age of the aforementioned lava and its estimated age. Specifically, the half-life of this system is 1.3 billion years, yielding dates with an uncertainty of  $\pm 4\%$  beyond 1/2 billion years. Uncertainty increases for more recent material. The technique simply does not offer enough significant figures to deal with such minute fractions of its half-life as would be represented by lava erupted less than a century ago. It can only give an estimate of, say, 20 million  $\pm$  20 million years, *which is correct*, as would be a bathroom scale that registered the weight of an atom, a virus and a pollen grain as  $1\pm 1$  pound, though their actual weights differ by orders of magnitude. This in no way invalidates such a scale for weighing people. Similar uncertainty would be expected when measuring the thickness of a human hair with a yardstick or a spy satellite. With that degree of uncertainty, it would be perfectly justifiable to date recently erupted lava *to the future*, the meaning of such an estimate being perfectly understandable to the knowledgeable.

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Unqualified people routinely and amusingly rationalize their deficiencies by applying the word *elite* pejoratively, which is upward-looking snobbery (the pot calling the sugar black). A snob is one whose feelings of superiority could be groundless, not one whose feelings of superiority are supported by arithmetic. Calling opponents the "self-anointed elite" is often wishful thinking, as the elite are, typically, merely espousers of arithmetic-anointed concepts. The elite are sometimes dismissed as "pseudo-intellectual," who indeed exist. However, this is often done inaccurately by people unable to distinguish a real intellect from a hole in the ground. "Mythologizing himself as a regular, brush-clearing guy," writes John Powers of George W.



Bush in the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, 2/26/06, “he’s laid on the anti-elitist populism.” If that is the extent of the ambition of the less-than-elite, then they are welcome to clear the brush of this writer anytime.

Creationists claim (via an accent fallacy) to demand “careful consideration of the facts,” as if scientists had anything else whatsoever to do, and as if anything other than science could do as good a job of considering facts. Some creationists refer pejoratively to “academics,” and accuse scientists of being so biased that they cannot see how much better the data are explained by creation than by evolution. It is the bias of logic that mathematically demonstrates the opposite, and it is creationists who fail to recognize this because they are either too frightened or too stupid to do the simple arithmetic. Objectivity does not exclude evaluation by way of logical, ontological and epistemological rigor, stringency and discrimination. Any exclusivist tendencies in science are properly due to robust logical judgment and are not elitist in the sense that anything that explanatorily succeeds is welcome. Inferior arguments are consigned to irrelevance by logic, not by capricious human whim. Such is the nature of proper scientific partisanship. Those dismissed as “supposedly superior, self-appointed intellectuals” stand upon demonstrably superior principles appointed by logic.

Creationists think the term “scientific” flatters the concept of evolution. Unable to tolerate the tyranny of facts, they arrogantly rationalize their failure by portraying scientists as their intellectual inferiors, the pot calling the sugar black. Similarly, there were surely many creationists among the Republicans who called Al Gore a sore loser but who fail even to recognize the arithmetic loss of creationism. Creationists thus typically manage to be just so many uppity dust eaters in denial and tilting at windmills as they celebrate not being “elite,” leaving that much more room at the top for the rest of us. By conservative example, Sean Hannity tells Democrats who lose elections, “Get over it.” Let those who cannot stand the heat of biology (not to mention civilization) not be a biologist. (“Doc, it hurts when I do this.”).

Evolution is denounced as atheistic science in the same way that quantum mechanics was denounced as Jewish physics. Phillip Johnson writes, “The objective is to convince people that Darwinism is inherently atheistic.” In accordance with Ockham’s Razor, this same objective is shared by all of science. Failure to acknowledge this is an accent fallacy aimed at a straw man. Nevertheless, as noted below, “Christian Darwinists” happen, though merely coincidentally.

Logic does not *preclude* belief in God; it precludes presupposition of such profligate concepts. Presupposition of nature does not depend on empirical evidence. The burden of proof (*onus probandi*) rests on those seeking to demonstrate the insufficiency of nature as a designer. Creationists have so far proved not this, but only the failure of their imaginations, though for this they nonetheless pat themselves on the back. When denying natural design, creationists exemplify the Philosophers’ Syndrome when they cite their own ignorance as evidence that nature lacks the requisite intelligence, while simultaneously claiming to have grounds for believing that a supernatural realm is not so lacking and is able to propagate causes into nature from the outside. The situation is like that of a criminal defendant who is presumed innocent and against whom the only evidence that can be brought is the impotent imagination of the prosecutor who cannot imagine how the defendant could be innocent. Ironically, conservatives decry the liberal tactic of unlimited judicial appeals for convicts.

Based on the supernatural, which is unexplorable, creationism is a house of cards that decoheres and is devoid of heuristic value, except perhaps in the field of psychopathology. It demonstrates nothing about nature except (charitably) that human imagination often fails or

otherwise that deliberate, deceitful self-deprecation can masquerade as conceptual paralysis. Though the specific reference is now lost, the following comment is typical: "How anyone can observe the order and design in the heavens, or the nervous, digestive and reproductive systems in the animal kingdom and still believe in evolution is mystifying." In the words of Daniel Dennett, think harder. People who find intelligence so foreign or who cannot program a VCR should feel modest rather than proud. Being thus mystified disqualifies one from civilization. How people fail to understand is not mystifying. Trees and rocks demonstrate the same lack of understanding every day. However, dishonor is earned whenever slothful induction causes the Philosophers' Syndrome in the form of the assumption that everyone must be as stupid as oneself when, in fact, that disability is not universal. The slothful induction of many people causes their ignorance to be projected onto geniuses, resulting in bafflement. When civilization is projected onto idiots, brutes and savages, one overestimates them such that one cannot understand their idiocy, brutality and savagery. Geniuses are merely innocent hostage to sanity, sobriety, civilization and logic. The Problem of Folly may be resolved as religious people resolve the Problem of Evil. Impropriety allows goodness and propriety to be distinguished, recognized and appreciated. It also justifies self-esteem in those who behave properly.

A process of elimination is only psychologically interesting if it involves not the properties of nature but merely the contents of one's imagination. Eliminating all the natural explanations *of which one is aware* still leaves those known by others and those that have yet to be invented, possibly due to the discoveries of certain phenomena not yet having been made. For example, photographic plates inexplicably exposed in spite of being kept in the dark led to the discovery of x-rays. In this case, God would have been invoked prematurely. Failure to discover capacities in nature is inadequate. Actual impossibility must be proven.

Many creationists oppose evolution because they wrongly believe that it threatens their faith, though facts and logic can only effect confidence. In matters of faith, facts and logic may be safely ignored, faith being independent of such things.

As noted earlier, religion requires faith because God is, practically speaking, all sizzle and no steak. Because of their negligible cumulative quantitative influence, miracles are like a candidate drug that is statistically indistinguishable from a placebo and therefore does not even deserve to be called a drug, not that people of faith would care. Administering placebos to them would thus be a victimless crime, according to their standards.

Some creationists view evolution as one of the great conspiracy theories. Rush Limbaugh once asked how many people would have to be lying if Bill Clinton were innocent. How many more scientists would have to be lying if evolution were no more than a conspiracy? Qualitatively, the contemporary scientific community consists of the most intelligent people alive and the most highly educated people that our species could ever have produced so far. The proposition that they would thus conspire against themselves should at least arouse suspicion. It is creationism that is more plausibly conspiratorial, though creationists need not be lying; they need only be stupid, as per Hanlon's Razor: "Never attribute to malice that which can be adequately explained by stupidity." This is excellently expressed in the joke (probably attributable to Lewis Black): "Why did the moron through the clock out the window? Because he was a *freakin' moron!*" This makes unnecessary the traditional response that he wanted to see time fly.

Successful theories are not the result of conspiracy but of “Minds-on Science” (the tautological title of an article by J. Raloff in *Science News*) occurring within what Rosa Brooks calls “the reality-based community.” (By contrast, George Will attributes to George W. Bush a “triumph of unrealism.”) Nevertheless, creationists often rationalize that science feels threatened, though, as previously explained, it cannot be, since science, properly conducted, cannot be wrong because, knowing when to be subjunctive rather than declarative, it never issues words that would ever need to be eaten. If nothing else, one emerges from it with one’s dignity intact and without having earned discredit. Science is what allows one to emerge on the winning side of Sturgeon’s Law (the empirical observation that “ninety percent of everything is crap”), whereas creationism, is often unable even to frame the issue satisfactorily. Thus, in addition to science being inherently robust, creationism lessens its own potential threat to it even further by seldom targeting it, aiming instead at straw men.

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Ptolemeic cosmology holds its own against Copernican cosmology within the context of Aristotelean physics. It is Galilean/Newtonian physics that allows Copernican cosmology to emerge as superior. Similarly, creationism is chimerical and pathological within the current scientific framework. If creationism is to outperform the orthodox model, then the rules must be changed. If rules other than those of chess are followed, then a game other than chess is being played. But since these rules of logic are not arbitrary, as explained earlier, one would be wise not to hold one’s breath (*rusticus expectat dum defluat amnis at ille labitur et labetur in omne volubilis avum*). Reason forces the mind to conform to nature, whereupon facts (*magna est veritas, et prævalebit*) and logic (*sub hoc signo vinces*) set the terms of the debate.

Evolutionary biology is accused of being dogmatic, which it indeed should be with respect to logic. Science rightly presumes natural explanations, filling theoretical gaps in accordance with Ockham’s Razor. For example, homology is a better explanation of isomorphism than is homoplasy because the former assumes the hysteresis of inherited ancestral traits, thus minimizing redundancy and implying the extent to which evolution has *not* occurred. Homology is the result of descent *without* modification (that is, of the wheel *not* being reinvented because it need not have been), which can be no more controversial to creationists than the entropic decay of clades. As with the null hypothesis and the presumption of criminal innocence, neither proof of nor even evidence for this most parsimonious of assumptions is necessary. And just as the presumption of criminal innocence does not preclude conviction, parallel evolution, though wrongly presupposed, is indeed acknowledged, as the wheel occasionally *requires* reinvention because of the lack of direct genetic communication (“You can’t get there from here.”)

All postulated homoplasy is adhocery, but it is not counterproductive if it only takes up where homology leaves off. Creationism’s denial of phylogeny forces it to rest on a presupposition of global homoplasy, resulting in catastrophic explanatory penury. It is the phylogenetic perspective that distinguishes baby from bathwater and minimizes homoplasy, whereas creationism is a denial of the baby in favor of the bathwater, though the pot nevertheless feels compelled to call the sugar black. Creationists love to point out that sometimes phylogenies based on individual molecules conflict, though the only issue is the net result based on all informative characters collectively. Even if certain features could be thought of as better explained by creationism, the bathwater does not deserve to be selectively retained at the

expense of the baby. Whatever the problems with the baby, the bathwater is worse, just as penny wisdom would not compensate for pound folly. As with any ad hoc hypothesis, homoplasy is to be invoked only as necessary. Doing otherwise is wrong and brings shame to the perpetrator. And as to God, even the improbable is superior to the oxymoronic. Evolutionary theory is ultimately the “fault” of the cause of biological similarities that are best interpreted as homologies, whether that cause be nature or God. Thus must creationists blame God for what science recognizes as the best explanation.

The farther in the past a novelty arose, the more deeply imbedded in the developmental program it would be expected to be currently. Central metabolism is strongly conserved, as opposed to more superficial, peripheral, ornamental and therefore variable characters. An audiophile once claimed that people have two ears because stereophonic hearing aided predator detection in our hominid ancestors. The reason normal humans have two ears is proximally because their parents did, and ultimately not because of selection pressure exerted a few hundreds of thousands of years ago, but because bilateral symmetry was established in our lineage half a billion years ago.

Looking beyond the type/token distinction, homologies are not merely a universal class. Ontologically, a gap cannot exist between a thing and itself. There is no need to explain the gap between the two eyes of fish, the six eyes of frogs and the nine eyes of humans because no such differences exist. All normal vertebrates have two eyes. One would not say that the suns that illuminate both humans and chimps are identical, but that it is the same sun. There are not two suns that are identical to each other, but one that is identical to itself. A similarly false plurality is used when referring to identical genes. If homologues, as they are properly presumed to be, then they are one gene. It may as well be said that the human gene is not one but billions of identical ones distributed among humans. In highly conserved proteins such as histones, it is more than simply the case that the respective examples found in chimps and humans are the same, nor even that chimps have the human protein and vice versa. The best explanation is that they are not two proteins but one. Hemoglobin differs interspecifically only by functionally neutral mutations such that all examples continue to deserve to carry the same name of hemoglobin. The eponymy of applying the name hemoglobin to the examples found in all mammals means that there is no gap within the category of hemoglobin. Similarly, among mammals, there is no gap in mammality, just as there is no gap in the eukaryoticity of eukaryotes.

Terry McDermott writes in the *Los Angeles Times*, 8/20/07, of the “unquestioned trust in evolution” in invoking homology in the use of animal models for human physiology. No trust is required for presumption of the null hypothesis. Just as the presumption of criminal innocence in no way disputes the existence of guilt, the presupposition of homology is not a claim that homoplasy is fictitious. It is merely a recognition of the explanatory superiority of homology over homoplasy. Neither represents historical fact, which is not directly accessible without a time machine.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 1/13/08, Michael Shermer writes of loss aversion, “It is extremely unlikely that this common trait would have evolved independently and in parallel between multiple primate species at different times and different places around the world.” Probability is irrelevant, homology being the most parsimonious (and therefore best) presumption, even if such events *were* likely. Likelihood does nothing to spare homoplasy the burden of proof. Homology is a measure of the extent to which change has not occurred, and it is more parsimonious to presume that nothing happened than that something did. Therefore, if nothing needs to have happened, then *fait accompli*, it is Miller Time.

Institutional preoccupation with selection tends to de-emphasize the more fundamental issue of variation, whose priority is expressed by the Mark C. Bloom principle: “You can’t choose the right tire if you don’t have a choice.”

Creationism’s denial of natural biological diversification is, ultimately, a particularly ironic denial of spontaneous decay. This property of nature is narrowly described by the second law of thermodynamics, the general formulation of which is Murphy’s Law. It asserts the inexorability of entropic deterioration, which is a class of behavior that is a fundamental property of nature, like the inverse square law. As Erda says in *Das Rheingold*, “Alles, was ist, endet” (All that is, ends). Heraclitus says, “Nothing endures but change.” Steven G. Kellman goes so far as to say, “With all due respect to Heraclitus – you can’t step in the same river even once.”

The dynamics of biological evolution are perhaps homologous, not merely analogous, to those described by the second law of thermodynamics. For the sake of convenience, then, “second law” may be used as shorthand when invoking this general phenomenon. In terms of infodynamics, information spontaneously changes, as per the telephone game.

Biological evolution is the inevitable consequence of finite genetic stability. Diffusion through genome space may be retarded, but it cannot be stopped absolutely. The expenditure of metabolic energy is required to ensure the accuracy of such functions as DNA replication and the charging of tRNA. But perpetual information machines are infodynamically prohibited just as perpetual motion machines are thermodynamically prohibited. Accordingly, no finite amount of energy is sufficient to guarantee the perpetual integrity of information, including that encoded in DNA. Given the informational analogue of the second law of thermodynamics, which precludes absolute immutability, phylogenesis is the normal, natural, expected, inevitable state of affairs. The abstract concept of fixed, perpetual species in the absence of miracles can be imagined but not implemented without the contravention of natural law.

On the level of population genetics, species are driven towards fragmentation. Like all ordered systems, species spontaneously disintegrate, increasing biodiversity. Speciation is the implementation of the second law on the species level, as are senescence and death on the organismal level. Phylogenesis (or cladogenesis) is the dissolution of one species into many and the extinction of some. Natural, nonmiraculous entropic decay suffices to cause species to disintegrate, with coalescence being the exception, not the rule.

Just as Murphy’s Law specifies neither the mode nor rate of failure, the second law only mandates a directional tendency, the rate of fulfillment of which may be submaximal. Genetic constraints and selection slow intraspecific differentiation and generate order by frustrating the drive toward equilibrium. When an ancestral species disintegrates, the descendants maintain some of the ancestral traits as synapomorphies, which represent failed opportunities to randomize genomes and to occupy new regions of genome space. Differential rates of change among characters yield hierarchically ordered supraspecific taxa.

The second law applies to the universe as a whole. Everything *collectively* runs down. But if everything had to run down individually, then houses could not be erected, watches could not be made even by watchmakers, and multicellular organisms could not develop from zygotes. Water runs downhill but also evaporates, such that rivers are replenished and can run perpetually. And a siphon demonstrates that water is perfectly capable of flowing uphill without even being gaseous as long as the net, overall process is downhill. Subsystems that run down can thus be reset at the expense of the environment. Cars run out of gas but somehow manage to get refilled

nevertheless. Airplanes and parachutists land but can ascend again. Before logs are burned to ash, the trees from which they are derived are “built up” from seeds and loaded with solar energy. Eggs do not unscramble *spontaneously*, but can be reformed through catabolism and then anabolic reassembly at the expense of metabolic energy. Individual organisms die but their genes are perpetuated in their offspring. If all evolution is energetically precluded, then so is ontogeny. In fact, neither is.

Creationists claim that scientists are “puzzled” by biodiversity, which is fully explained by the second law, and William Dembski asserts that things “explainable by a law” do not imply intelligent design. In Dan Piraro’s *Bizarro* cartoon of 3/23/07 titled “Physics Court,” a judge says to a levitating man, “Having gone up and refused to come down, I hereby find you in violation of the law.” The *Prickly City* cartoon of 5/24/08 reads, “Gravity. It’s not just a good idea. It’s the law.” Whether or not diversification is a good idea, it too is the law. In summary, interspecific similarity and diversity are explained, respectively, by homology and entropic decay.

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Darwin’s contribution is sometimes rejected in a way that almost rejects Kant’s. Evolution *per se* is simply change with respect to time, which is inescapable except by abstraction. Time is an *a priori* form of sensibility; a mode of perception; a category of experience; a condition of the objective reality of all phenomena. Temporal differentiation is a necessary aspect of experience. (An old joke has it that time is nature’s way of keeping everything from happening all at once.) It is more than a fact; it is the context within which all facts are perceived and contemplated. Neither perception nor cognition occurs outside the context of time. Time is no mere adjunct to experience but is formative of it. Time is ontologically and existentially prior to experience and thus not refutable by experience. Time is the possibility of change and evolution is the actualization of that possibility. Evolution is, therefore, neither a theory nor a belief nor merely a fact, but is among the most fundamental of facts. It is the fact that engenders belief in the derivative concept of time, and the fact that the second law of thermodynamics was invented to explain.

Unlike quantum mechanics or atoms, the existence of time is intuitively obvious because even in the presence of a static external environment, the mind is unstable such that consciousness is a time-related phenomenon, and mental states are transitory and successive. The sequentiality of mental states allows moments in time to be mutually distinguishable such that the distinction between past and future is unavoidably perceived. The concept of time rests on this perception of mental evolution. Thus everyone who believes in time necessarily believes in evolution due to their necessarily prior personal experience of it. This ontological guarantee means that the denial of evolution *per se* entails the denial of time. Given consciousness, grounds for doubting time are lacking. What *is* theoretical is history: the specific sequence of events in the past.

This temporal aspect of consciousness is recognized in a Zen story from the collection called *The Gateless Gate*: Two monks were watching a flag flapping in the wind. One said to the other, “The flag is moving.” The other replied, “The wind is moving.” Huineng overheard this. He said, “Not the flag, not the wind; mind is moving.”

Recall also the following exchange in *As You Like It* (III. ii.): Rosalind says, “I pray you, what is’t o’clock?” Orlando says, “You should ask me, what time o’day: there’s no clock in the

forest.” Rosalind replies, “Then there is no true lover in the forest; else sighing every minute, and groaning every hour, would detect the lazy foot of Time as well as a clock.”

A writer to National Geographic once complained that “the possibility of evolution is promoted as fact.” The possibility of evolution is a fact because the actuality of evolution *per se* is less in doubt than anything save existence itself. And the arithmetically demonstrable explanatory superiority of biological evolution would make a lie of its promotion as anything less.

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Physical laws as currently understood make events in the past inaccessible to direct observation. Just as no finite expenditure of energy is sufficient to accelerate a massive object beyond the speed of light, travel backwards in time would entail a greater-than-infinite cost and is thus impossible.

All historical facts are contingent, unique and unrepeatable. No direct, practical test is applicable to past events, but a logical test is. Historical facts cannot be proved, but the explanatory superiority of historical theories can be. With time machines unavailable (*pro re nata*), the next best tool is Ockham’s Razor, its biohistorical implementation being the cladogram.

The application of Ockham’s Razor to phylogenetics is not an attempt to imitate the the workings of nature, as a standard caricature would have it. Einstein insisted that nature behave simply and rationally. Critics, however, say that it cannot be known with certainty that nature always operates by the simplest possible mechanism. The criterion of parsimony is a property of logic, not of nature. Regardless of how nature works, this is how logic works.

Evolutionary biology is said to be speculative, but it is no more so than any other historical endeavor, and the speculation does not extend to metaphysics, as it does in creationism. Speculation associated with natural history should cause no greater concern than the unprovability of George Washington’s presidency, given that we cannot go back in time to witness George Washington being president. We can only use the diachronic theory of his presidency to explain the synchronic data available in the present. That is, the theory of his presidency is merely the most parsimonious explanation of the assertions of his presidency that are found in history books. In spite of this, creationists are perfectly content to speak declaratively rather than subjunctively about George Washington’s presidency. So, when creationists complain about declarations of events occurring more than 10,000 years in the past, it is merely the pot calling the kettle black.

Jonathan R. Wagner writes, “It is important to bear in mind what a cladogram is and is not. . . . A cladogram is most emphatically *not* a description of the pattern that evolution took in producing the taxa under study.” While a cladogram does not *necessarily* reveal the actual historical path taken by evolution, physics and logic make it impossible for there to be any better estimate of that path than the most parsimonious cladogram. On a certain level, debate persists as to whether evolution is a fact. What is factual in evolution is not the historicity of any particular hypothetical phylogeny, but rather the victory of the theory chosen as the winner by logic. Whether or not the scenario it describes really happened, it really is the winner.

Phylogeny is the null hypothesis, and no physical mechanism exists that would allow its manifestly superior explanatory utility to be challenged. Thus it ineluctably wins by default and the case is closed (*satis verborum*), not by narrow-minded scientists, but by nature herself in

concert with logic. Unable to acquire grounds for rejecting the null hypothesis, creationists can only rationalize the victory of science as illegitimate.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 8/10/05, Vicki Gewe writes, “In what way is evolution testable? Until someone invents a time machine and goes back to the beginning of the world, scientists will be no more able to prove that evolution originated life than to disprove that an intelligent being did.” Evolution is testable by comparison with competitive theories. Even if scientists are “no more able to prove” evolution, they are in no need of doing so, but are perfectly capable of disproving the explanatory equivalence or superiority of “an intelligent being.” The historicity of evolution (or anything) cannot be proved, but the propriety of its presupposition and its explanatory superiority can be, and are trivially obvious. As its natural, materialistic, mechanistic presuppositions are the most parsimonious and therefore the *correct* ones, it bears no burden of proof. It is for creationists to disprove evolution, while the latter rightly reins preeminent in the meantime. Wherever this burden goes unrecognized by the philosophically challenged, civilization is simply not occurring. “Until someone invents a time machine,” phylogenies inferred from maximally parsimonious cladograms are logically and physically incapable of being improved, and the philosophically subliterate are identifiable by their mental misbehavior. Thus are evolution and sanity both testable.

In the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, 2/4/07, Kit R. Roane writes of “[t]he ultimate veracity of evolutionary theory.” Veracity with respect to history is not the issue. What is ultimately true about it is its explanatory superiority. Certainty is exclusive to the analytic realm of math and logic. But it is mathematically that the explanatory superiority of phylogeny is demonstrated, and so is no less certain than that 2 is less than 3. All history is uncertain, and any claim of certainty in the synthetic realm is simply wrong. The presidency of George Washington is not certain but merely the best explanation for why the assertion continues to be made. At best, bygone causes may be thought of as having lingering effects due to hysteresis. According to William Faulkner, “The past is never dead. It’s not even past.”

Tests of the utility of parsimony in terms of probability or predictive accuracy are sometimes sought, as, for example, against known *in vitro* viral phylogenies. But the principle of parsimony is meant to adjudicate the competition among hypothetical phylogenies, in which known phylogenies need not participate. Hypotheses are speculative, and a phenomenon cannot be said to be known unless grounds for speculation are lacking. Accuracy can only be tested in circumstances where competition and adjudication are unnecessary. The principle of parsimony determines proper behavior in the absence of evidence, rendering moot the question of its applicability in the *presence* of evidence. Gaps in knowledge are properly filled parsimoniously pending the discovery of facts. Where nature is discovered to behave in a less-than-parsimonious manner, no such gap exists and there is no need to guess about what is already known. Where accuracy is indeterminate, as is the case with events in the past that cannot be directly observed, the only alternative to parsimony is waste.

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In spite of the fundamental, elementary nature of the concepts underlying evolutionary theory, creationist confusion somehow manages to persist. Biological evolution is defined as descent with modification. These terms, as they are meant to be understood, are not employed in any contentious sense. So, what part of this do creationists not understand? Is reproduction doubted? (Those who think that “only God can make a tree” do not believe in reproduction by



biogenesis.) Is heredity doubted? Is time doubted? Is the thermodynamically and infodynamically mandated inevitability of modification doubted? They can offer no principled basis for objection to that which is based on unassailable presuppositions and beyond reasonable criticism, except for the sociological assertion that it fails to deter idiots from misbehavior.

Recall that modification need not be thought of in Darwinian terms, and that the circumscribed battle between the Bible and Darwin is a false dichotomy. Like those conservative accent fallacies associated with abortion or with the role of chance in nature, attacks focused narrowly on Darwinism prompt an absolutely justified demurrer. And even if conservatives tend not to be biological Darwinists, they ironically tend to be social Darwinists preaching what Anthony Arthur calls “the optimistic doctrine of inevitable progress powered by unfettered capitalism.”

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The social implications of evolutionary theory have no impact on biology. Such concerns are delegated to sociology. Unfortunately, treating people collectively like intelligent beings is overly optimistic, and an *argumentum ad baculum* is necessary (*pro bono publico*) in the absence of intellects capable of ethics. Machiavelian expedience may demand the prudential concession of throwing an appeasing sop to the mainstream (*data obolum Belisario*) and teaching whatever will pacify the mob and minimize the crime rate (*ou la chèvre est attachée, il faut qu'elle broute*). If those who are ignorant but potent require mollifying husbandry of some sort, then religion may be useful as risk mitigation.

Unfortunately, things may not be that simple. In the *Los Angeles Times*, 10/1/05, Rosa Brooks tells of a study by Gregory S. Paul published in the *Journal of Religion and Society* that shows that religiosity in “18 prosperous democracies, including the United States,” correlates positively with “homicide, sexually transmitted diseases, teen pregnancy, abortion and child mortality.” “Christians aren’t perfect, just forgiven,” says the bumper sticker. Whether forgiven or not, not only are theists not perfect, but in certain categories they seem to be demonstrably worse.

In the November, 2006, issue of *Vanity Fair*, James Wolcott reports on how the red states lead the nation in various evils. For example, all 15 states with the highest rates of death by firearms in 2003, according to the National Center for Health Statistics, were red. According to the same source, of the 15 states with the highest rates of suicide in 2003, 14 were red. According to the same source, of the 10 states with the highest rates of illegitimacy in 2003, nine were red. Of the 45 states reporting in 2004, the 10 with the highest rates of divorce were red. Wolcott also notes that Newt Gingrich and Rush Limbaugh have each been married three times.

On his radio 9/20/06, Rush Limbaugh ridiculed the idea of suing car manufacturers for the pollution produced by their cars, saying that a car by itself does not pollute unless a driver drives it. As discussed in the accompanying essays on cinema, responsibility, according to conservatives, rests with the user, not the manufacturer. Conservatives may vilify Darwin, but according to their own principles, the producers of neither cars nor alcohol nor tobacco nor firearms nor films nor scientific theories need feel guilty when their products are abused. According to Wesley James, “It is grossly unfair to judge a wine flawed because it makes a poor beer.” Also, while “there is no culpability in being a con’s target . . . , one does share complicity in being a con’s victim.”

There was once a cartoon in which George W. Bush says, “I didn’t mislead. You misfollowed.” Conservatives, such as cartoonist Bruce Tinsley, insist that people be held responsible for their own obesity. Let people be no less responsible for their ignorance and stupidity.

In his book *Saving Childhood: Protecting Our Children from the National Assault on Innocence*, Michael Medved reportedly claims that children have a right to their childhood. Apparently, so do many adults. Conservatives reject a difficult childhood as an excuse for criminal behavior. Let creationists be held to the same standard of responsibility (Ezekiel 18:30, Galatians 6:4-5).

On Bill O’Reilly’s television program 6/4/09, Bernard Goldberg disclaimed responsibility for maniacs wanting to kill the people censured in Goldberg’s books. He also absolved Jody Foster of any blame for inspiring illegal acts among fans. Let science also be thus absolved (*ex abusu non arguitur in usum*), especially by conservatives who still manage to support gun rights in spite of gun abuse.

In the cartoon of 11/24/05, Mallard asks the president if he has “any plans to mollify your party’s ‘moderates.’” (Again, unless otherwise specified, all cartoons referred to will be the *Mallard Fillmore* cartoon of Bruce Tinsley.) The president answers, “Absolutely! I plan to continue spending like a drunken Democrat, Mallard.” It is equally silly to mollify the rabble with folly, except as a necessary evil, with evil in the logical sense being necessary in the sociological. Thus could one sociologically justify convenient fictions told as compassionate lies with people’s best interest in mind, not to mention the tricks that people play on themselves, for they often allow themselves to be misguided for sociological purposes.

It is said that in his book *God is Not Great*, Christopher Hitchens “argues that the world would be a better place without religion.” With savagery to be suppressed, this may not be sociologically true. But better or not, truth is truth. Whether or not religion has a negative social influence, truth is right and falsehood is wrong. The belief that  $2+2=5$  can perhaps be justified politically or sociologically with the excuse that it never caused unjust suffering or death. But however “good” or “bad” the consequences of such a belief may be, the proposition itself remains *arithmetically* incorrect nonetheless. As the saying (usually attributed to Richard Pryor) goes, “Who you gonna believe, me or your lyin’ eyes?” Whom are *you* going to believe, creationists or lying arithmetic? However sociologically deficient secularists may be, they enjoy the support of arithmetic, which, for the intelligent, suffices. On his television program, 8/21/07, Sean Hannity said that it was “hard for the human ego to take” creationism, when it is creationists who find it hard to submit to the impartial judgment of egoless arithmetic. The scientific mind readily accepts all truth.

This writer recognizes and acknowledges the sociological utility of religion in deterring the misbehavior of those too stupid to engage in ethics, but he also recognizes the ontological and epistemological irrelevance of the sociological. However much the rabble require muzzling, stupidity and falsehood wear thin. Truth is right, whether or not it is good (*fiat justitia, ruat caelum*), and honor cannot be bought. Further, the promotion of an inferior explanation and the vulgarization of science at the expense of intellectual stringency are ethical failures of duty that cannot be offset by any emotional or political benefit. Atheism, like anything else, can be done incorrectly. It is unclear how theism could be done correctly even in principle, except to the extent that it can control savagery, even if concurrently contributing to intellectual delinquency.

A game can be imagined called “Kansas golf” in which Ockham’s Razor is suspended such that every player earns a different score but there are no losers. The players are “all just golfers.” Rather than recognizing that two is less than three, they are regarded as “both just numbers,” in accordance with what may be called “Kansas arithmetic.”

Opponents of evolution often demand equal time for the teaching of creationism. Phlogiston, impetus and the demon theory of disease have their place. Knowledge of the existence of obsolete theories is necessary in the study of the history of science. But giving equal and *uncritical* time to all conceivable theories during the education of innocent children would imply a counterfactual explanatory equivalence or at least an *argumentum ad ignorantiam*, whereas obscurity is the proper consequence of explanatory profligacy. The implied parity would only reflect and encourage a lack of logical and journalistic stringency. Such logical relativism would be no better than the moral relativism opposed by conservatives. Conservatives accuse liberals of rationalizing the violation of the law committed by illegal immigrants when it should be a simple matter of law and order. Let not conservatives similarly rationalize the violation of the laws of logic. Conservatives already reject situational ethics. Let them also reject situational logic.

Whether or not the concept of equal pay for equal work is valid in feminism, it is in logic. To conservatives, equal pay independent of equal work constitutes socialism. Conservatives also oppose the multiculturalist doctrine of arbitrary cultural equality. Wanting something for nothing is said to be a liberal fault, yet conservatives demand it with respect to creationism, which, like everything else, should be rewarded only in proportion to its explanatory utility.

Meghan O’Rourke writes of Robert frost, “of free verse he sniffed that he would ‘as soon play tennis with the net down.’” Just such a luxury is sought by creationists. However, regency in science, as in golf, is conferred by arithmetic, such that the ascendancy and dominion of evolutionary theory is not in the least arbitrary.

Scientific theories are subject to the meritocratic rigors of logic, and conservatives demand high educational standards. The absence of such standards allows for unmerited favor, for which the poster boy might be John Cleese’s dismembered knight in *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* who proposes to “call it a draw.” On his radio program 6/13/08, Michael Medved said of the acquisition of unearned benefits, “There’s a name for it: theft.” Curricularity is not a right but a privilege to be earned. Evolution deserves the same prominence of place in education that it rightfully enjoys in science.

Speaking of evolution and creation, one critic wrote, “If neither can be proved as cold, hard fact, why should they not be taught alongside each other?” Temporal constraints and editorial discipline limit many teachers to the theory whose incontestable explanatory superiority is “proved as cold, hard fact” via simple arithmetic. And even a victory that is kept secret remains a victory.

It may be that there needs to be “room for” all points of view, and there is nothing that should not be taught *properly*. But theories are not to be taught indiscriminately. (“An indifferent purveying of wares is not education,” writes Michael Ruse.) Rather, triage demands that if time does not permit the teaching of all conceivable theories, then they should be taught *pro rata* and *ad valorem*. Losers walk. Rubbernecking should be left to graduate students. For most others, time is wasted surveying the wreckage of theories justly consigned to the scrap heap and not worth worrying. Creationism stands condemned as intellectual detritus (*lana caprina*) and serves only as cultural demarcation or lowbrow kitsch sideshow (*plus on est de fous, plus on rit*). The place that it has earned for itself in science is beneath the radar (*aquila non capit muscas*). Daniel

Dennett quotes Donald Hebb as saying, “If it isn’t worth doing, it isn’t worth doing well.” The teaching of creationism well is exactly what creationists oppose. It is also a fundamental pedagogical principle that teaching mistakes runs the risk of students remembering nothing else.

On his radio program 6/17/08, Dennis Prager asserted that compassion should not override standards. (This will henceforth be referred to as the Prager Doctrine.) People are at liberty to believe whatever they like, and those who enjoy the taste of civilization’s dust are welcome to eat it and to position themselves accordingly. Such people deserve tolerance, but not indulgence. Pluralism should tolerate the people who hold creationist beliefs, but should not go so far as to tolerate those beliefs themselves. Sean Hannity regularly insults 9/11 demolition theorists, though creationists are no less absurd. Conservatives denounce amnesty for illegal aliens. Nor should any be extended to creationism, which is no more deserving of it than criminals.

If, as Otto Weininger claims, “Logic and ethics are fundamentally the same,” then creationism is freighted and surcharged with immorality and is discordant with the concept of character-based education. Science is in no way cavalier in consigning creationism to the history books. It does so using sound, stable, objective, just, quantitative criteria. Logically, creationism is a cause well lost. Unable to compete and survive the rigors of meritocratic science, such intellectual detritus is sustainable only by being charitably grandfathered into a *Salon des Refusés* via the arbitrary and hypertolerant fiat of multiculturalism, tokenism, affirmative action and social promotion. Only there can the medals of its defeat be flaunted. Given that creationism is a stillborn, DOA, nonstarter cul-de-sac, it was inevitable that when it fought the law (of logic), the law won, and with no resulting injustice (*executio juris non habet injuriam*)(*actus curiae nemonem gravabit*).

Phillip E. Johnson wrote a book titled *Defeating Darwinism by Opening Minds*. Here again is yet another example of the monomaniacal obsession with Darwin’s theory to the exclusion of those of such people as Mayr, Kimura and Kaufmann. Just as Copernicanism served as a foundation for Kepler, Galileo, Newton and Einstein, Darwinism is just the beginning. Likewise, opening minds is merely preliminary to filling them, as one must be open-minded, but not empty-minded. Joseph Campbell observes that the Eastern tradition of the annihilation of ego results in the underdevelopment of criticality, judgment, evaluation and creativity. It is critical that when material is allowed into one’s open mind, one does not merely receive it passively. One must do the math and evaluate.

Conservatives urge biology teachers to “teach the controversy,” while teachers fear being forced to “teach discredited materials.” No problem arises as long as the discredited is taught as such. John Morris, president of the Institute for Creation Science, says, “Evolution is so unsupportable.” Creationism is much less supportable, and thus loses. Both sides should be aired, but not uncritically, and should be accurately labeled as better and worse, respectively. Students should indeed learn criticisms of evolution. However, to avoid an accent fallacy, they should also learn the more numerous and more serious criticisms of creationism so as to appreciate its inferiority.

Creationists often suggest that students be allowed to decide which model is best. But conservatives are known to oppose unstructured or nonjudgmental educational programs such as The New Math. They insist that students simply learn the correct answers. Creationism could in principle seek special dispensation by analogy to affirmative action or social promotion under the tolerance of multiculturalism. Unfortunately, conservatives oppose such policies and cannot have their cake and eat it too. Conservatives bemoan liberal “moral equivalence,” while

simultaneously failing to recognize the lack of explanatory equivalence between creation and evolution. Conservatives pride themselves on their opposition to situational ethics. But when the opportunistic practice of situational logic is denied to them, it is called bigotry or elitism. Call it what you like, but losers walk.

Regardless of what people ultimately decide for themselves, logic has already decided this issue every bit as conclusively as it has resolved the question of whether 2 is less than 3 (*res judicata*). In such matters, it is for arithmetic to decide, and it does (*non obstante veredicto*). Though no child should be left behind *unjustly*, and students deserve the ability to choose what they want to believe, civilization deserves the ability to deny social promotion to the undeserving who choose incorrectly and even to deride their false sense of entitlement.

A commentator once said, "It's OK to teach Darwin, but you have to balance it with something else, like creationism." Presumably then, a standard medical education should be balanced with the demon theory of disease, and proper arithmetic should be balanced with a faulty version. No controversy should arise when a sports hall of fame does not devote equal space and acclaim for every person who ever played the sport.

Arguing with fierce conviction does not compensate for inferior reasoning and giving scant attention to facts. Also, talk is not only cheap, but safe. Armchair quarterbacks are not qualified to speak *ex cathedra* and are not subject to sacks by real defensive linemen. Singers rejected by the Metropolitan Opera can still get away with singing off-key in the shower. Creationists are only *virtual* failures as long as they avoid operating in a meritocratic sphere that would make their beliefs subject to logical stringency. Academia is not ungenerous, but merely generous *pro rata*. As in other realms, ruination by amateurs is unwelcome. Affirmative action for creationism would constitute socialistic redistribution of merit in a jealous attempt to get even. It would exemplify a kind of radical egalitarianism that would be equivalent to admitting every human who has ever lived into every sport's hall of fame.

Egalitarianism should properly provide for equality at the start, of a contest but not at the finish. Opportunity should exist for both success and failure. Differential performance on a level playing field yields winners and losers, though many people are either too cowardly to admit it or too stupid to do the math that determines the winner. Many who espouse the freedom to fail do not always recognize failure when it occurs. Molecular drive (cited in a previous essay) is seldom criticized by creationists. If they hold it to be not worth mentioning, then they invalidate any "equal time" stance they might take and acknowledge differential explanatory utility. Alternatively, they may simply be insufficiently educated to have heard of it.

When God is invited into the classroom, He Himself never actually appears. Therefore, contrary to the title of the film *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, it is in fact *Deus Absconditus* who is guilty of truancy. In His place, creationists instead offer the failure of their own imaginations (the Philosophers' Syndrome), which they wrongly believe implies God. As per Ockham's Razor, ad hoc hypotheses, such as God, are not to be invoked beyond necessity, and failure of imagination does not constitute logical necessity.

One is free to acknowledge God, but not to overgeneralize the acknowledgment. To say "In God We Trust" is no more statistically valid than saying "We are right-handed heterosexual Protestants." Additionally, it is merely *de facto*, not *de jure*. Perhaps these acknowledgers feel responsible for such acknowledgment since God does not acknowledge Himself. In 1986, Pat Robertson expressed the intention "to rule the world for God," as if the omnipotent needed help (Acts 17:25).

In spite of the impossibility of having their cake and eating it too, theists declare that God cannot be understood by reason while simultaneously demanding that He be included in reason-based curricula. Conservatives oppose diversity for its own sake. Accordingly, let them not unjustly dignify creationism by uncritically rubberstamping it and advancing it as anywhere near equal to its superiors merely “to broaden the curriculum.”

Science favors verism over “Crowtherism,” Andrew Sarris’s word for wanting to hide truth from the public. Eschewing intellectual honesty and academic integrity, IDer Michael Behe tells aspiring teachers, “Until you have tenure, until you’re protected, keep your mouth shut and your head down.” IDers supposedly want “to teach children how to think, not what to think.” Children should certainly be taught how to think better than IDers. Providing a related example on his radio program 8/21/09, Dennis Prager said that one should be cheerful even when not feeling “chipper,” saying that if one felt lousy, “So what?” and adding that he considered those among his favorite words. He then denounced liberals for acting on their feelings in the name of authenticity saying, “What the hell is ‘authentic?’ It’s body odor.” Let this writer’s version of the Prager Doctrine be called “Truth or [Adverse] Consequences.” The truth often hurts, but this makes it no less true. Those whom it hurts are invited to put on their big boy pants, grow a pair and man up. Otherwise, they are simply wrong and eating the dust of those who are not.

A textbook published by the Bob Jones University Press supposedly asserts that “if the conclusions contradict the word of God, the conclusions are wrong, no matter how many scientific facts may appear to back them.” By contrast, logic and civilization hold that if God says that  $2+2=5$ , then that is just tough. Also, “the word of God” can only be hoped to be such, and everything placed in opposition to “scientific facts” is tautologically worse. Theists may claim that their way is the only way (*extra ecclesiam nulla salus*), but this is the opposite of the truth with respect to knowledge and may not even be true with respect to comfort. Nor is it relevant to the issue of ethics, as will be addressed in a subsequent essay.

Susan Jacoby claims that “dumbness has been defined downward.” Science, however, settles for nothing less than the best, and has no use for the arrogated dignity and unmerited self-satisfaction of bottom feeders, or what Rebecca Solnit calls the “confrontational confidence of the totally ignorant.” George W. Bush sought to “challenge students to the max” with high academic standards and no social promotion. The only possible flaw in this strategy would be inconsistency of application, with immunity being granted to conservatives.

Of airplanes towing banners depicting aborted fetuses, Gregg Cunningham, executive director of the Center for Bio-Ethical Reform, said, “The airplanes will give us the opportunity to reach the elite, sectarian universities that have been pretty smug in thinking they can have a debate-free zone. We will use these pictures like a cudgel.” Few such institutions could match the debate-free zones of churches and religious schools. (Ironically, it is conservatives who oppose as government censorship any Fairness Doctrine that might be imposed by the Federal Communications Commission, claiming it would have a “chilling effect” on what should be free and open debate.)

Christian schools are like insurance companies with limited maximum benefits. They cater to cowards who are afraid of what they might learn and who want to protect their innocence from being tainted by knowledge, which is considered so dangerous that it is meted out on a need-to-know basis, such that much of The True and The Beautiful is withheld. It is often the people who downplay and denigrate nonhuman intelligence who unforgivably obstruct human learning with a stained glass ceiling. Practicing abstinence in education, comfort is offered at the

expense of deforming the thinking of students and seeing them bask in misconsidered pride. This postpones intellectual development, leaving students intellectually infantilized. In December, 2001, George W. Bush said, "America must fight the enemies of progress." So be it.

A suit brought by Christian schools against the University of California "accuses the UC Board of Regents and five university officials of violating the plaintiff's rights to freedom of speech and religion." Such rights are not entitlements to social promotion and affirmative action. Science education constitutes no infringement of religious freedom. Theists remain free to attend church and to do as they please, even to abstain from civilization. They do, however, lack the right to go unrebutted (*quid pro quo*). Freedom of speech is not an entitlement to avoid evaluation, which could only be achieved by denying that same freedom to others. Victims of impartiality get what they deserve. Theists have a right to believe, but not with impunity, as per Newton's third law.

In the cartoon of 9/9/05, Mallard reports, "A new report by ACT Inc. shows that hundreds of thousands of this year's incoming college freshmen aren't academically prepared to do college-level work. On the bright side, there are plenty of colleges out there that don't require students to do college-level work." The Christian schools cited above are arguing to be excused from just such standards.

A principal concern of creationists with respect to education entails a risk of losing one's soul. Such a fear has the same ontological status as fear of losing the friendship of Superman and cannot be regarded as significant in the absence of grounds for belief in the thing supposedly at risk. If education results in damnation, then perhaps kids should play it safe by staying out of school absolutely, in the abstinence-only tradition of sexual conservatism. ("Doc, it hurts when I do this.") Thus may ignorance yield salvation, though in the meantime it denies one the opportunity to contribute intellectually and leaves one in the wake of those who are.

Religion as a default strategy is merely the acknowledgment of the statistical stupidity of mankind. Making it mandatory would entail social demotion of the intelligent, who should be at least as free to succeed as others are to fail. Knowledge is optional, education is voluntary and civilization is discretionary. But cake cannot be had and eaten, too. Even if God penalizes intelligence and rewards stupidity, the responsibility of civilization is to do the opposite.

David Horowitz has written a book titled *One-Party Classroom: How Radical Professors at America's Top Colleges Indoctrinate Students and Undermine Our Democracy*. In it, he disparages an array of college courses. The ones brought anecdotally to the attention of this writer sound as if they are electives. Conservatives espouse personal responsibility, which should include allowing students (tautologically) to choose their own electives. And even if such classes are required, attendance at the particular institution in question is voluntary, as is attending college *per se*. ("Doc, it hurts when I do this.") College students do not qualify as a captive audience because they are legally considered adults at the age when they would normally be attending college and are thus deemed responsible. If they are not, then let them neither vote nor drive nor drink alcohol. Conservatives reject a traumatic childhood as an excuse for misbehavior, making adult trauma (including college experiences) even less exculpatory and obliging conservatives to reject it as an excuse *a fortiori*. And if children were involved, conservatives favor local control of elementary education, such that, according to them, any nonlocal issues regarding curriculum are none of their business. As for creationism, in academia, it, like astrology, is absolutely dependent on multicultural relativism and pluralism.

Horowitz has also written a book titled *Indoctrination U.: The Left's War Against Academic Freedom*. He clearly opposes academic freedom from the imposition of his idea of fairness. Let conservatives reconcile this with their own opposition to the Fairness Doctrine. His Academic Bill of Rights seeks to insure a place for political conservatism in academia. Horowitz acknowledges “the uncertainty and unsettled character of all human knowledge,” even though the analytic realm cannot help but be settled, and Rush Limbaugh holds that history is settled. In the synthetic realm, nothing excuses misbehavior in the face of uncertainty.

Discussing Title IX in the *Los Angeles Times*, 6/10/05, David Gelernter writes, “Lack of balance on college faculties doesn’t automatically prove bigotry.” He approvingly quotes Russell Jacoby as saying, “Nothing has shown that higher education discriminates against conservatives, who probably apply in smaller numbers than liberals.”

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 8/10/05, in which she accuses the paper of bias against conservatives, Suzette Van Bylevelt asks if that newspaper, whose editorial staff had criticized ID, believes “that too much knowledge can be detrimental to a student.” Conservatives are the ones who crusade to shelter children from knowledge of sexuality and *modern* science. Unaware of what an embarrassment it would be for them, creationists naively ask for a fair hearing, when they are the ones who seem to be either too cowardly or too stupid to teach creationism *well*. Criticality is perfectly consistent with fairness.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 8/27/05, Rosa Brooks reports, “in 1987, Pope John Paul II denounced academic pluralists who think that ‘ultimate questions about human life and destiny have no final answers or that all beliefs are of equal value.’” Education should be balanced in the sense that students should be *exposed* to alternatives. But this exposure should never be uncritical, for no amount of illogic *could* balance logic. A “balanced” account acknowledges that when one theory is orders of magnitude weightier, the scales tip, unless the insubstantial one is helped, as by the cheating butcher’s thumb. In an evenhandedly evaluative “fair hearing,” creationism would receive a perfectly fair shake and a perfectly fair share, commensurate with its value. Otherwise, text books must also say that  $2+2=5$ , in the interest of equal time.

In the cartoon of 8/29/05, Mallard speaks of China bringing “tyranny . . . into the 21st century.” Conservatives also claim that gay marriage damages the institution of marriage, while remaining silent on the damage done to the institution of logic by creationism, which they seek to perpetuate.

In the cartoon of 9/29/05, titled “News from the future. 2008.” reporter: “In a move designed to better enable illegal aliens to *use* their new illegal-alien driver’s licenses, the California legislature is debating a bill that would provide free cars to those who can prove they are in the country illegally.” It is no less absurd to give creationism a free ride.

Writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, 11/23/05, Russell Jacoby bemoans the fact that academic honesty is now considered “just one alternative among many.” He writes, “We live in a choice-addled society. The jargon of choice, a second cousin of diversity and multiculturalism, undermines intellectual integrity and coherence.” He continues, “Were television situation comedies great literature? Teach the conflict. For a while, one counted on resolute conservatives to resist this intellectual guff and to remind us that not every view is worth teaching. No longer. Conservatives and even religious fundamentalists now talk the talk of diversity and choice” using “leftist cant.” Students should indeed be made aware of alternative viewpoints, but not uncritically. Jacoby concludes, “Mesmerized by the jargon of choice, we forget a basic principle: Truth itself is partisan.” The truth can also hurt, even when the issue is a simple matter of



arithmetic, as when John Lennon said that the Beatles were “more popular than Jesus.” Either they were or they were not.

In the cartoon of 2/5/06, titled, “College Football’s ‘B.C.S. Committee’ watches Super-Bowl 40,” six unflatteringly portrayed characters, including a clown, variously say, “So let me get this straight. The best teams play *each other*? Until there are only two left? And then *they* play? Who’d wanna watch *that*?” The idea of competition among theories is equally novel to creationist although Newt Gingrich speaks of the “contest of ideas” existing in the free world.

In the cartoon of 6/10/06, Mallard reports, “New evidence suggests that the president’s speech declaring that his immigration plan is not ‘amnesty’ wasn’t the president’s idea at all, but was actually written by the same guy who wrote that ‘affirmative action is not a quota system.’” It is folly not to recognize creationism’s dependence on affirmative action.

In *Los Angeles Times*, 8/27/06, Michael Skube writes, “When [Flannery] O’Connor spoke once at Emory University in Atlanta, she was asked if the schools were discouraging our creative writers. ‘They’re not discouraging them enough,’ she said.” Theories may come from anywhere, but are subjected to the ordeal of testing, such that not all will deserve to emerge from that stringently filtering bottleneck.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 10/2/07, Jonah Goldberg describes multiculturalism as “the odd notion that all cultures are equal.” (He has been quoted elsewhere as saying that multiculturalism involves “the notion that all ideas are equal, all systems equivalent, all cultures of [similar] worth.”) This stance is happily rejected here, for Goldberg’s piece ends with mention of something “that Couric and so many others seem so embarrassed by,” the dangling preposition demonstrating that Goldberg is culturally eating the dust of *this* writer, who welcomes every opportunity to enjoy the thrill of victory.

The cartoon of 11/24/07 quotes William F. Buckley as saying, “Liberals claim to want to give a hearing to other views, but then are shocked and offended to learn that there are other views.” The word *but* is almost misapplied. Other views that are demonstrably inferior properly cause disappointment.

On his radio program, 3/27/08, Michael Medved espoused the concept of differential cultural merit, ranking Elizabethan England above Melanesian head hunters. However, the music that accompanied his show was not that of Orlando Gibbons or John Dowland but rock. Bach’s second Brandenburg concerto was good enough for William F. Buckley on his *Firingline*, while Medved seems content to put the hay down where the goats can get it. This writer both agrees with Medved and leaves him in the dust. Also, Medved must in his example argue for a kind of net superiority, as the Elizabethans were probably no better with respect to bathing habits. As the saying goes, Queen Elizabeth I used to bathe twice a year whether she needed to or not. Additionally, many primitive cultures are at least well adapted to their environment, and Elizabethan Englishmen would not be expected to get along very well if abandoned in the jungle.

In the cartoon of 1/10/09, Mallard offers his “New-Year’s Prediction #19: “Liberals, who purport to care about ‘institutional discrimination,’ will remain indifferent to the dearth of Asian-Americans in the NBA.” Conservatives accept the latter, while claiming to be victims of “institutional discrimination” when arithmetic reveals the dearth of explanatory utility in creationism.

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Ken Ham is said to “trust” “God’s account over Darwin’s.” Those too stupid to do the math may as well fall back on “trust” and *hope* to be right. Also, many of the theories of Darwin, like those of Copernicus, have been bettered by superior ones in more recent times.

Ham calls the Bible “the history book of the universe.” He asserts that the Bible is an eyewitness account, but with no more journalistic rigor than the reports of Superman flying or the stories concocted by Parson Weems (*nemo dat qui non habet*). Even if the Bible is an eyewitness account, it remains an account contemplated in the present, and does not allow the reader to be the actual eyewitness, as would a time machine. Additionally, even eyewitness accounts often fail to achieve consensus, as when law students fail to describe an intruder who runs through their class unannounced.

Whether or not God was present in the past, organisms themselves were. And just as in a forensic murder investigation, their fossilized remains, together with the strata in which they rest, claim, in some cases, to be millions of years old. They may be wrong or even lying, but that is their claim.

Even if God is telling the truth, He would seem to be responsible for fossils and seemingly vestigial structures that lie. A God who covers His tracks does not seem to want to be believed. Also, one god may claim a young universe, but different gods give differing accounts. When Hindus consult (and trust) God, they are given a cosmology consistent with an “old” universe. If an Abrahamic God is to be believed, then why not a Hindu god? As with law students, consensus among religions is simply not to be found.

Jerry Falwell said (7/18/05) something to the effect that if God could create an adult Adam who seemed older than his real age, why could he not do the same with the Universe? He could, but did not, such that the universe does not support this contention of young-earth creationists (YECs), who are thus forced to rely on the Bible. They may claim that the universe is younger *than it looks*, but it does not look as young as they claim. Ham seems to admit this when he claims that “it doesn’t take millions of years to create ancient-looking artifacts.” Ralph Hodgson says, “Some things have to be believed to be seen.” With comfort being an illegitimate excuse for belief in the first place, a young-looking universe is simply not otherwise seen.

To explain light reaching Earth from objects located more than 10,000 light years away, some YECs postulate a higher speed of light in the past. Not just speed of light, but also mutation rate must have dramatically slowed, given that molecular clocks extrapolate back beyond 6,000 years ago. Human mitochondrial Eve, for example, is calculated as having lived 180,000 years ago. If God just made things that way, then there is no need to postulate a change in the speed of light to account for galaxies at cosmological distances.

Ham offers “evolution stumpers,” as if the pseudoquestions of theology and metaphysics could be answered even in principle. Many more creation stumpers exist: Why is there a Hubble constant? Why is there any cosmic microwave background at all? Why is iridium concentrated at the K-T boundary? Why are sedimentary rocks stratified at all? Creationists may address such topics, but the Bible does not.

Remarking on the proposed affinity of birds and dinosaurs, Ham says that “if that were true, I’d be worried about my Thanksgiving turkey!” Why? A turkey that is related to dinosaurs (or worms or ferns) remains a turkey and is dead by the time it is purchased at the market.

Ham claims that one is forced to invoke God when all other explanations are exhausted, though the slothful induction of creationists makes them notorious for premature (and false) estimates of exhaustion. According to Ham’s own standards, only one who is divine could know all, and it is not possible for the nondivine to know when all possibilities are exhausted. Ham

claims to get his information from God, but, by his own standards, his lack of divinity precludes him from confirming God's information. Since the nondivine, including Ham himself, are in no position to judge whether God's story is true, they must take it on faith, which is not truth-preserving.

Ham has said that he wants people to think about the origins issue in a new way (*argumentum ad novitatem*). The salient characteristic of his way is not its novelty but its inferiority. In other words, in addition to being new, it is worse.

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The following are excerpts from "Recent Problems in Evolution" on godandscience.org. Each is followed by commentary.

### ***The Adequacy of the Fossil Record***

Evolutionists have used the excuse that the fossil record is not complete enough to be an accurate representation of the history of life on the Earth. A recent book, *The Adequacy of the Fossil Record* (Donovan, S.K. and C.R.C. Paul, eds. 1998. *The Adequacy of the Fossil Record*. Wiley, Chichester, UK), examined the fossil record in terms of its completeness, bias (over and under representation of certain species and groups of organisms), and stratigraphic range (its completeness for a species over the entire history of its existence). Their conclusions were that the fossil record is surprisingly complete, with about 10% of all species that have ever lived being represented. There are some biases and stratigraphic incompleteness in the fossil record, but these problems can be estimated mathematically from the available data. There are many examples of stratigraphic gaps in the fossil record, with these gaps being the rule rather than the exception. In the past, it has been assumed that the gaps represent incompleteness of the fossil record. The authors suggest the "heretical" view that stratigraphic data should be used to test the phylogenetic relationships between species rather than assume that the relationships exist and that the fossil record is incomplete.

Baumiller, T.K. 1999. Enough remains to work with. *Science* 283: 1271.

Paleontology is just one of four methods for determining character polarity, and phylogeny is the logically correct presupposition.

### ***Molecular clock says eutherian mammals diverged 130 million years ago - fossils indicate 65 million years ago***

The molecular clock hypothesis suggests that certain orders of eutherian mammals diverge as early as 129 million years ago (Kumar, S. and S.B. Hedges. 1998. *Nature* 392: 917). However, the current study indicates quite clearly (from many thousands of fossils) that nearly all the placental mammalian orders appeared suddenly at the time of the Cretaceous-Tertiary boundary, 65 million years ago. Researchers analyzed the quality of the fossil record during the late Cretaceous period, and found that there were large numbers of fossils that make it extremely unlikely that eutherian mammals existed before that time. According to Dr. Foote, "If the record really stinks, almost every species you find will be from single fossils. But the empirical record is something like 10 to 100 times

greater than what would be required to allow for a 65-million-year gap in the fossil record.”

Foote, M. J.P. Hunter, C.M. Janis, and J.J. Sepkoski, Jr. 1999. Evolutionary and preservational constraints on origins of biologic groups: divergence times of eutherian mammals. *Science* 283: 1310-1314.

Failing to cite the uncertainty in the estimate, it is merely reported that the divergence in question may have occurred *as early as* 129 million years ago (and this only by suggestion), thus not precluding the possibility of it occurring as late as 65 million years ago. It is also acknowledged that the earlier date refers to “certain orders,” perhaps those not included in the statement “nearly all.” Molecular divergence of the most primitive orders would naturally have preceded morphological divergence among later descendants. Morphological radiation is expected in the wake of the extinction of the dinosaurs, but true molecular clocks earn their name by their insensitivity to such events and correlating with nothing but the linear passage of time.

### ***Molecular clock problems again***

Much of evolutionary theory is based upon the hypothesis that all organisms have evolved from previous ancestors and are, ultimately, related. Such a hypothesis would predict that related genes would show this evolution their structure. However, recent evidence shows that “molecular clocks” tick at different rates for different lineages and for different genes. For example, the gene that encodes superoxide dismutase has 5 times the base pair substitution rate in certain species of *Drosophila* (fruit flies) compared to other multicellular organisms. Another gene, “Odysseus,” has “evolved” more in the last 500 thousand years than the preceding 700 million years (1000 times faster rate now than in the past). Although evolutionary theories are unable to explain or predict these variations, creationary science does explain these discrepancies. God designed living organisms, reusing and modifying some of the genetic designs, but not necessarily in a way that would be consistent with a molecular clock.

Strauss, E. 1999. Can mitochondrial clocks keep time? *Science* 283: 1435-1438.

The running of molecular clocks at different rates has always been part of the theory. The rate of such a clock slows to the extent that it is subject to natural selection. Clock rate is irrelevant to phylogenetic topology, and so cannot contradict universal relatedness.

### ***Deleterious mutation rate too high for humans***

A recent study examined the mutation rate for humans. Using “conservative assumptions” the authors found that the overall mutation rates was 4.2 mutations per person per generation, with a deleterious rate of 1.6. When using more realistic assumptions the overall mutation rate for humans become 6.7 with a deleterious rate of 3.1. Such a high rate should have resulted in extinction of our species long ago. They stated in their conclusion:

“The deleterious mutation rate appears to be so high in humans and our close relatives that it is doubtful that such species, which have low reproductive rates, could survive if mutational effects on fitness were to combine in a multiplicative way.”

The authors must rely upon a rare association of mutations, termed synergistic epistasis to explain why the numerous hypothesized deleterious mutations have not overwhelmed our

genome. Instead of postulating the obvious (that the human genome is not as old as evolution would teach), evolutionists again are relying upon the improbable to retain the evolutionary paradigm.

Crow, J.F. 1999. The odds of losing at genetic roulette. *Nature* 397: 293-294.

Eyre-Walker, A. & Keightley, P. D. 1999. High genomic deleterious mutation rates in hominids. *Nature* 397, 344-347.

It is high reproductive rates, such as those that make mice and fruit flies preferred experimental animals, that would accelerate extinction, given that the mutation rates are stated as per generation. Multiplicative combination is referred to subjunctively, and so can be ignored here. Instead of postulating the superior explanation that the mutation rate would have been lower in the past due to the absence of the environmental mutagens that result from industrialization, creationists rely on the worst possible assumptions to retain their inferior paradigm. Creationists who posit a change in the speed of light to explain cosmological distances must *a fortiori* allow for a change in mutation rate, which is much less fundamental and much more likely. Many conservatives deplore the rewriting of history, which may be little more than a sunk costs fallacy (not wanting past efforts to have been expended in vain). Similarly, creationists may simply fear shifting paradigms in midstream, regardless of the potential benefits.

***One dinosaur species found on multiple continents separated by hundreds of miles of ocean!***

Scientists have found a dinosaur species, *Allosaurus fragilis*, dated to have lived in Colorado some 150 million years ago, also lived on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean, in Portugal, at about the same time. The new fossil was discovered by paleontologist Bernardino Perez-Moreno of the Universidad Aut—noma de Madrid and colleagues in 150-million-year-old rock formations in Leira, 155 kilometers north of Lisbon. The skeleton, of a juvenile dino, is incomplete, but has telltale bones such as the pelvis, vertebrae, and fragments of leg bones, including “unmistakable pelvic features unique to *A. fragilis*.” One puzzle is how the *Allosaurus* wound up on two continents: The supercontinent of Pangea had broken up tens of millions of years earlier, and by 170 million years ago Portugal was separated from North America by a sea hundreds of miles wide. Geologist Alan Smith of Cambridge University, who specializes in reconstructing ancient geography said, “you cannot get rid of the central Atlantic between Africa and America at this time—the evidence is incontrovertible.” No reasonable explanations are available from our evolutionist friends. Water wings anybody?

Staff writer. 1999. Random Samples. *Science* 284: 903.

Punctuated *equilibrium* anybody? If frogs can maintain morphology for 50 million years, then perhaps other tetrapods could behave similarly. Also, any individual facts that individual theories do not explain are outweighed by the innumerable facts that science in general, and phylogeny in particular, can. It is the overall score that counts, and it is the bathwater that is to be discarded, not the baby.

***Little or no evolution in ecological niches at the species level***

A recent scientific study suggests that ecological niches evolve little or not at all at the time of a speciation event. The study shows ecological niche differences suddenly appear

at the level of biological families. These results confirm the creation model seen in the Bible, which describes God's creative activities occurring at the level of "kinds" (which are similar to the biological classification of families). See page Naturalistic Biological Change and the Bible.

Peterson, A.T., J. Soberón, and V. Sánchez-Cordero. 1999. Conservatism of Ecological Niches in Evolutionary Time. *Science* 285: 1265-1267.

This stance at last allows for evolution below the family level, though the denial of phylogeny at any level sacrifices the capacity to equal the parsimony of strictly phylogenetic models. And life is every bit as hierarchically structured above the family level as it is below it. The philosophical problem of "kinds" is discussed elsewhere.

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Ann Coulter's book *Godless: The Church of Liberalism* offers a delightful example of an amateur in over her head. Coulter likes to make liberals fume by employing what Tom Congdon calls "reverse demagoguery," which is telling people the opposite of what they want to hear. This writer prefers telling the truth, whatever the reaction. Her criticism of liberals sometimes takes the form of a claim that they are as bad as conservatives, which is a *tu quoque* fallacy and thus not exculpatory for the latter group. As the category "liberals" does not include this writer, not even sticks and stones impact him when hurled at Coulter's intended target.

Coulter's major (and specious) *tu quoque* contention is that science, like religion, involves faith. Even if people accept the teaching of science on faith, they need not, because science is the process of generating confidence, which is better. Coulter demands evidence from science as if it were relevant to people of faith, who can simply take what they like on faith. Choices based on differential confidence involve the weighing of evidence, whereas faith is arbitrary with respect to evidence, so the choice of what to take on faith is left to the emotions. The invalidity of faith, even when interpreted intransitively, results from its applicability being independent of the object of faith, whether science or religion. It is when cowards are insufficiently opiated by science that they resort to logically inferior alternatives.

Coulter opines that interspecific similarity does not prove evolution. In fact, it proves just the opposite. From another perspective, what it proves is not the historicity of phylogeny, but the explanatory superiority thereof. Interspecific similarities constitute data for which homology is the best explanation. Homology allows characters to be inherited from a common ancestor *unmodified*. Coulter wrongly states, "It is just as likely that the similarities are proof of intelligent design." Probability is irrelevant and proof is not an available option. Intelligent design is less parsimonious and nature is known to exist, while the supernatural is not.

In *Sky & Telescope*, 1/07, Gary Seronik observes that because of its brightness fluctuations, the star Mira "still has the potential to surprise, even after 400 years of scrutiny." However, in the language of economics, Coulter discounts the future steeply when she finds supposed significance in the assertion that speciation has not been observed after 150 years of searching, even though stellar parallax was sought for more than 2,000 years before *it* was observed, the point being that it eventually was. (In the third century B.C., Aristarchus was smart enough to hypothesize that stellar parallax would be a consequence of heliocentricity. It was first observationally confirmed for the star 61 Cygni by Friedrich Wilhelm Bessel in 1838.) And well before stellar parallax *was* observed, there nevertheless existed valid and compelling reasons to

posit heliocentricity, especially since Galileo's observation of the gibbous phase of Venus. Now, Coulter may believe that the solar system was not always heliocentric but became so only after heliocentricity was *invented* by Bessel. If heliocentricity and phylogeny are true, then they have always been so, however long it may take for Coulter to become convinced of either (*magna est veritas, et praevalerebit*).

On Bill O'Reilly's television show, 10/3/06, Coulter referred to astrology as "undisprovable," when in fact it is no more "undisprovable" than a candidate drug, the effects of which either can or cannot falsify the null hypothesis. Similarly, human personality types are either astronomically correlated or not, making astrology "disprovable" by comparison with the null hypothesis. In *Godless*, Coulter also claims that "liberals think evolution disproves God." Whether or not it does, it need not, as it does not bear the burden of proof relative to the supernatural. Because of Coulter's background, the irony here prompts particular disappointment (or amusement).

"How do we know their husbands weren't planning to divorce these harpies?" Coulter asks regarding the "Jersey Girls." How does one know that a criminal defendant is innocent? One need not. One need only fail to prove otherwise, all alternative being less parsimonious. Criminal innocence need not be proved within 150 years *or ever*. Searching should be left to the bearers of the burden of proof. The proper wait is for the proper presumption to be *disproved*. If in the last 150 years no criminal defendant has been proven innocent, then perhaps Coulter believes that no acquittals have been justified during that time. Coulter is an attorney, and so her failure to distinguish an *onus probandi* from a hole in the ground either reflects poorly on her alma mater (University of Michigan Law School), reflects a native stupidity that education was unable to override, or is illustrative of stupidity in her target audience that she seeks to exploit, with commercial success resulting from putting the hay down where the goats can get it.

To be undiscovered is not to be impossible. Even if Coulter's charge is true, it in no way precludes future discovery. Until then, the burden of proof may rest on proponents of particular mechanisms, etc. But on the most fundamental level, nature is known to exist, while the supernatural is not. As the most parsimonious proposition, nature always deserves presupposition. By contrast, if Coulter searched for 150 years without discovering how a magician achieved his effects, then, according to her, said magician must necessarily have employed genuine magic.

In the cartoon of 6/30/06, Mallard says, "In case you missed the mainstream media's coverage of the death of Al-Qaida's leader in Iraq, here it is again." A reporter then says, "Apparently, U.S. forces have killed Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi, or whatever, but *not* Osama." Similarly, let Coulter, in the manner deemed proper by conservatives, celebrate *all* that science *has* accomplished.

In the cartoon of 7/2/06, a man preparing to celebrate Independence Day says to his family, "Fireworks, hot dogs, charcoal, beer, soda, lawn chairs. Did we forget anything?" Behind him is seen the image of a revolutionary. Let Coulter not forget what science has achieved. Otherwise, let her treat herself when ill.

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 6/18/06, Carmen has planted a seed in the desert, but Winslow is impatient and says, "Go! Get out while you can! Cut and run! Cut and run!!!" With respect to evolution, Coulter would do well to cultivate the patience of stay-the-course conservatives rather than imitate cut-and-run liberals. Given that conservatives opposed a timetable for military withdrawal from Iraq (and spoke of a "date for surrender"), let them be smart enough not to tolerate a timetable for withdrawal in the realm of science. Conservatives

condemn liberal impatience with the search for Osama Bin Laden. When it comes to science, let conservatives exemplify the patience that they themselves espouse.

In several *Prickly City* cartoons of May 2007, Harry Reid is invoked to exemplify this behavior. For example, on 5/11, as Carmen plays a video game, Winslow says to her, “You lost, Carmen! Why Keep playing?” She replies, Shouldn’t you be rooting for me, Winslow, instead of going all ‘Harry Reid’ on me?!” This makes it all the more delicious when Coulter goes all “Harry Reid” on science, the enterprise least deserving of such treatment.

Perhaps Coulter expects different species to *look* different, when looks can actually converge amid genetic divergence, as exemplified by the many extinct marsupial analogs of placental mammals. Coulter need only exterminate the intermediate demes in the example given in a subsequent essay in order to yield reproductively isolated sibling species, according to the biological species concept.

Commenting on *Godless* for Media Matters for America in June 2006, Robert Savillo writes:

On Page 199, she claims that evolution is “a make-believe story, based on a theory that is a tautology, with no proof in the scientist’s laboratory or the fossil record.”

In his *Darwinism Defended: A Guide to the Evolution Controversies*, Michael Ruse begins his discussion of the claim of tautology as follows: “I believe that this objection is as wide of the mark as it is possible for an objection to be. In at least three respects, there is an empirical, nontautological, falsifiable basis to the mechanism cherished by Darwinians. That is to say, inasmuch as Darwinians want to apply models containing their mechanism to the living world, they commit themselves to at least three testable claims.” Ruse then discusses the claims of reproductive struggle among nonidentical organisms, nonrandom success being a function of organismal distinction, and the systematic, consistent nature of selection. Generally, tautology *per se* is not an unwelcome detriment, and it forms the basis of most of mathematics. If lack of proof does not deter Christians from belief in the Bible, then let it not hinder *any* belief they might consider. Conversely, if Coulter can find no proof of urination in the fossil record, can she find grounds for believing in it?

Coulter claims that evolutionary theory “doesn’t explain why we don’t find *any* bad mutations – a dog that mutated antennae, or gills, or a tail on its head.” Whoever “we” may be, scientists, as noted above, find homeotic mutation routinely, such as fruit flies with legs on their heads. Also, it is a necessary tenet of intelligent design theory that because of irreducible complexity, mutations cannot be other than bad. To them, nothing other than “bad mutations” could be found.

Savillo also cites the following:

Throw in enough words like *imagine*, *perhaps*, and *might have* -- and you’ve got yourself a scientific theory! How about this: *Imagine* a giant raccoon passed gas and *perhaps* the resulting gas *might* have created the vast variety of life we see on Earth. *And if you don’t accept the giant raccoon flatulence theory for the origin of life, you must be a fundamentalist Christian nut who believes the Earth is flat.* That’s basically how the argument for evolution goes [emphasis in original].



The Popperian process of conjecture and refutation allows the source of a conjecture to be irrelevant. Ronald Reagan famously said, “Trust, but verify.” Speculation is integral to science, and scientist consequently speculate freely. But they also test, and the ultimate idleness of particular forms of speculation cause them to lack explanatory utility, and lead, as in the case of Coulter’s raccoon, to the pot calling the sugar black. One is not an idiot for making any and all conjectures. One is only an idiot for not acknowledging a conjecture’s explanatory superiority once all competition has been falsified. Coulter’s raccoon is a perfectly welcome conjecture, but it has not survived refutation. Allowing the raccoon theory to go untested is the province of religion, not science. Science, unlike religion, exerts quality control. Science thus generates confidence, while religion requires faith, which is not truth-preserving. People who fail to recognize the best theories available may as well believe the Earth is flat, as they have no reason not to.

Creationists blame people for not believing what is unworthy of belief while they themselves believe such things irresponsibly. They ultimately offer little more than “God did it.” (Daniel Dennett opines that “a single proposition isn’t a theory, it’s a slogan.”) “That’s basically how the argument” *against* “evolution goes.” Not satisfied with this, they then inject sociological irrelevancies into their argument by claiming that evolutionary theory is morally detrimental, as if this could somehow impact scientific truth. Hugh Everett postulated parallel universes in order to resolve paradoxes arising from the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics, as exemplified by Schrödinger’s cat, not as the basis of a magic realist novel, and regardless of whether it would increase the rate of damnation.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 10/7/07, Lee Siegel writes, “*Credo quia absurdum est*. I believe because it is absurd. That statement – either a corruption or a paraphrase of the saying of an early church father – is the essence of religious belief. By taking a leap of faith in God, you create value out of nothingness. The more difficult it is to believe, the stronger the faith that flies in the face of absurdity. Your willingness to stake your life on the possibility of an impossibility makes a fact out of a fantasy.” This is true in the sense that the fantasy is factually fantastic and the fantasizer’s behavior is inconsistent with sanity. If scientists are guilty of absurd beliefs, Siegel provides here the apologetic rationale not merely for approval but admiration. If absurdity is to be a source of pride, then let Coulter and Siegel believe that 3 is less than 2, to be proud of themselves for it, and to eat this writer’s dust.

Savillo also writes:

The jacket of Coulter’s book states that Coulter writes from a “keen appreciation for genuine science.” Inside, she credits a cadre of supporters of intelligent design:

“I couldn’t have written about evolution without the generous tutoring of Michael Behe, David Berlinski, and William Dembski, all of whom are fabulous at translating complex ideas, unlike liberal arts types, who constantly force me to the dictionary to relearn the meaning of *quotidian*.” [emphasis in original]

Even *with* “generous tutoring,” the keenness of Coulter’s “appreciation for genuine science” is vastly duller than that of this writer, as she seems to be a victim of translation that is “fabulous” to the point of dysanalogy or falsehood. Coulter has written a book titled *How to Talk to a Liberal (If You Must)*. As to how one is to talk to conservatives, Coulter suggests and appreciates putting the hay down where the monosyllabic goats can get it. (This stance receives further conservative support in the cartoon of 6/14/02, wherein Mallard speaks approvingly of

children using “smaller words and shorter sentences” with their intellectual inferiors.) Conservatives espouse personal responsibility (Galatians 6:5), but Coulter seems not to want to take responsibility for looking up the definitions of words that an educated person may be expected to know already. Apparently, the education of a lawyer may be deep, but may not be particularly broad. This is further reflected in the fact that Coulter employs a level of scientific discourse that makes her writing suitable only for what might charitably be called a “general” audience.

Explicitly allowing for differential intelligence, Coulter, in 12/05, told an audience at the University of Connecticut, “I love to engage in repartee with people who are stupider than I am.” This writer feels similarly, hence the inclusion in these essays of Coulter and her target audience with the attitude expressed by Oscar Wilde when saying, “One must have a heart of stone to read the death of Little Nell without laughing.”

On the Hannity & Colmes program, 6/8/06, Coulter said that analogies were removed from the SAT because liberals could not understand them, though in her book she imagines there to be significance to her observation that the iPod did not descend from the Walkman via simple Darwinian processes. What pride she must take in realizing that nonbiological objects do not reproduce genetically, or that planetary motion cannot be explained by circular orbits.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 6/28/06, Jim Roberts writes that Ann Coulter “is one of a handful of writers who tells it like it is with substantiated, verifiable, factual proof.” As she does not always do so with the best proof available, it allows this writer to do the same and even better.

In her book *Guilty: Liberal “Victims” and Their Assault on America*, Ann Coulter claims that 70% of criminals came from single-parent homes. She never bothers to state what percentage applies to the general population. It may very well be that 99% of criminals came from homes in which they wore clothes and ate food, obliging Coulter, *a fortiori*, to condemn clothes and food until she drops the other shoe, which is unnecessary if she merely wishes to fool those too stupid to know of the existence of that other shoe.

This writer vaguely recalls Coulter describing Lamarckianism but labeling it Darwinism. Even if this recollection is faulty and Coulter is not guilty of this mischaracterization, there exist people who are. Science discredited and rejected Lamarckian inheritance of acquired characteristics in the nineteenth century, such that it might as well be said that Soviet communism involved rule by czars. It is a great pity that news of this has not yet trickled down to everyone. Scientist know better because science teaches reportorial responsibility, including not overextending oneself beyond one’s capacities. And even though the scientific community is not immune to misbehavior and not everyone can be counted on to do science improperly, proper science happens.

Conservatives generally hold rehabilitation to be impossible (though they readily forgive Rush Limbaugh for his drug problems). Carnivores can be domesticated to the point where they eat Purina rather than you, while still remaining carnivores. Whether discussing sexual orientation or nicotine addiction, Coulter insists that such behavior is all-or-none, though nature is free to ignore her. If Coulter’s errors are incorrigible even according to her, then so be it.

It may not seem fair to pick on nonscientists who are out of their depth. But anyone who enters the arena voluntarily is fair game. If they cannot prudently avoid publicizing their ignorance and cannot stand the resultant heat, the kitchen door is open. If Coulter chooses to box above her weight, then let the chips fall where they may. If Mallard Fillmore approves of teachers without education degrees (8/1/04) but not of “members of the space-shuttle project”

without degrees in aeronautical engineering (8/12/05), then there is no telling what he would think of Coulter commenting on biology. As a nonscientist who enjoys deniability more plausible than that of Michael Behe, Coulter 's failures may be understandable, whereas this writer lacks any such excuse. In the spirit of Laura Ingraham's *Shut Up and Sing*, let Coulter shut up and stick to her *Fach*.

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The following observations also revisit some material from previous essays. Reviewing the book *Why Intelligent Design Fails: A Scientific Critique of the New Creationism* on Amazon.com, Brian Irwin offers the following indented comments:

**Why this book fails miserably:**

In Chapter 2, 'Grand Designs and Facile Analogies', the author Matt Young presents a series of feeble arguments in an attempt to refute Behe's mousetrap argument and Dembski's archer argument. He claims 'Thus, we could expect a mouse to evolve from a protomouse by a succession of small changes, whereas we can never expect a mousetrap to evolve from a mousetrap.' (pge 23) This argument is nothing but hand-waving and explains the origin of nothing. On the same page, Young claims that mousetraps propagate by blueprints, whereas mice propagate by recipes, with errors propagating during reproduction. By definition, errors are defects, so the propagation of errors over time would eventually result in auto destruction (death), not the development of new complexity. He also mentions the functioning of the eye: 'The eye is not irreducibly complex. You can take away the lens or the cones, for example, and still have useful if impaired vision.' (pge 24) This type of reasoning is flawed, because it fails to account for the evolutionary origin of any part of the eye, where each mutation needs to have a selective value, otherwise it won't take over the population. Young claims that Behe uses 'God-of-the-gaps' type of arguments, however this is complete hypocrisy because in his attempt to explain the origin of chlorophyll, Young needs to resort to hand-waving speculation about unknown types of chlorophyll: 'There may be potentially many more that have never evolved' (pge 26), and (incredibly) 'other universes' (pge 27). Young elsewhere claims: 'If the genetic algorithm can generate complexity, then so can evolution by natural selection.' (pge 28).

No controversy could exist about mousetrap evolution because they do not reproduce genetically. If *errors* is the wrong word, then use another. Failure "to account for the evolutionary origin of any part of the eye" is irrelevant to falsifying Behe's contention of irreducible complexity. Selectively neutral mutations "take over the population" perfectly well, forming the basis of molecular clocks. Even if hypocrisy, it is nonetheless true about Behe, whereas Young resorts not to God but to something better. The use of God of the Gaps in science is just as bad as using Guilt of the Gaps in criminal justice, whereas proper behavior is to use nature and innocence of the gaps, respectively. Many types of chlorophyll are potential right here in this universe.

However genetic algorithms do not generate complexity, they are deterministic so Young's argument collapses. On page 29 Young discusses 'fitness function', and on page 30 he discusses simple, ordered structures such as snowflakes. These arguments fail to account for the origin of the complexity of life, and are therefore irrelevant to the discussion of origins.

“[G]enetic algorithms do not generate complexity” unless their implementation is imperfect, which all must be. Because the second law of thermodynamics mandates spontaneously increasing complexity, mutation unavoidably happens. It is also hoped that Irwin will someday learn how immunoglobulins are produced. Creationists read far too much into their surprise (*omne ignotum pro magnifico*), for however deterministic computers may seem, the predictability of complex systems is limited, and it is already a tenet of computer science that any complex program will behave surprisingly.

In Chapter 3, 'Common Descent', Gert Korthof attempts to show that the history of life is supported by the evolutionary belief in common descent. However Korthof fails because only a partial analysis of the data is done. There is no mention in the chapter of the enormous discontinuities in the supposed tree of life, such as the gap between single-celled organisms and complex multi-cellular invertebrates, and vast gap between invertebrates and fish.

Discontinuities are the exception in phylogeny but the rule in creationism, making the former the arithmetic winner. The gap between unicellularity and multicellularity is bridged by every multicellular organism at the first cleavage of the zygote.

Korthof attempts to use the geological column to support common descent (pge 37), however this is dubious at best because 99% of the supposed geological column does not even exist. It is claimed that shared body structures between animals can be explained by Darwinian theory (pge 38), however there is no mention of the similar structure between a person's arm and leg, which makes nonsense of the whole argument.

Because of logic, phylogeny would be the proper presupposition even in the total absence of geology. Far from being nonsense, it demonstrates the lack of necessity to reinvent the wheel. Only differences, not reiterations, require explanation.

In a similar way, Korthof argues that DNA similarities are evidence for common descent, however what he fails to mention is that 50% of human DNA is similar to that of a banana. Korthof ignores the scientific case against common descent, which is described in numerous anti-evolution writings such as 'Evolution: A Theory in Crisis' (Dr Michael Denton).

Irwin seems not to understand the meaning of the word *common*, as he should be interested in the 50% of human DNA is *not* similar to that of a banana, which is *not* explained by common descent. The wheel need not be reinvented if it can merely be inherited. Creationists may argue about the initial invention, but cannot equal phylogeny's parsimony subsequent to that and offer no concrete mechanisms to be judged alongside nature's. Why men and bananas have

*anything* in common (not to mention the specific, hierarchical distribution of traits) is best explained by homology. As eukaryotes, humans and bananas are expected to share genetic codes, central metabolism and so forth. Humans share 99% of their genetic information with bonobos, meaning that it is 99% accounted for by inheritance, in which even creationists believe, apparently. “Degree of similarity is never equated with degree of relatedness in the phylogenetic system,” write Daniel R. Brooks and Deborah A. Mc Lennan in *Phylogeny, Ecology, and Behavior: A Research Program in Comparative Biology*, where they also note that “a phylogenetic tree is a hypothesis of the genealogical relationships among taxa.” Creationist alternatives are worse in relation to available data.

Theoretical imperfection is not news but a trivial truth. The case against phylogeny cannot help but be weaker than the case for it. Creation is unworthy of presumption and, unlike phylogeny, bares the burden of proof. Meanwhile, gaps are more parsimoniously filled with nature than with God.

In Chapter 4, ‘Darwin’s Transparent Box’, David Ussery attempts to show that the bacterial flagellum is not irreducibly complex, but can be accounted for by mutation and natural selection. However any skeptical reader of this chapter would not be convinced by Ussery’s arguments.

As discussed in a previous essay, even if irreducible complexity occurs biologically, it is not an evolutionary problem because it need not arise in the manner suggested by ID proponents. Also, in his 1999 paper *Irreducible Complexity and The Problem of Biochemical Emergence* (full reference given in a previous essay), Bruce Weber reports on mutations that produce flagella that are functional in spite of being less complex than normal. Thus has the irreducible complexity of the flagellum already been falsified.

In a nutshell, Ussery first of all assumes that evolutionism is true, then he merely mentions that some of the flagellum’s proteins are similar to proteins found elsewhere. ‘But what if you already had each of the three components lying around, doing other functions in the cell, and then put them together?’ (pge 51).

Nature is the correct presupposition because all others are worse. Possibility is all that is required to falsify impossibility. Actuality and history are different matters.

Ussery not only fails to account for the origin of these ‘components’, but he makes absolutely no attempt to explain the origin of the assembly instructions for the flagellum. All Ussery does is the usual trick of waving the magic evolutionary wand, and the complex structure appears!

As if creationists could offer anything as concrete. Scientists at least wave that which represents nature, which is known to exist, whereas creationists wave a wand representing that which is not. On that count, science wins.

Chapter 6 of the book attempts to show that the origin of the bacterial flagellum can be accounted for naturally, but the author (Musgrave) fails to specify any details of nucleotide substitutions that would be required, nor does he present any probability

calculations to support his hypothesis. Musgrave's arguments are little more than story-telling, and he virtually acknowledges this himself (pge 83). Pointing out that different systems have homologous proteins/enzymes does absolutely nothing to show a naturalistic origin of these proteins/enzymes.

What is the *probability* of God doing *anything*? As expected, Irwin himself offers no corresponding calculation. What, then, is the *supernatural* explanation that gives details on the level of nucleotides? How is creationism any more than story-telling? Scientist at least tell stories about actual entities, among which God does not deserve to be counted.

Homologous proteins are not two proteins but the same one that did not undergo biochemical or genetic bifurcation in spite of being distributed into separate species due to phylogenetic bifurcation. Homology is thus a naturalistic explanation, so Irwin perhaps meant to say "similar" rather than "homologous." As the more parsimonious alternative, homology deserves presumption, while homoplasy does not, and nor *a fortiori* does God.

Chapter 7, 'Self-Organisation and the Origin of Complexity' is completely irrelevant to the evolution/creation issue because it fails to give a naturalistic origin for life. The authors of this chapter (Shanks and Karsai) present examples of simple self-ordering systems such as the Benard-cell system and they claim that examples such as these 'constitute a threat to Dembski's creationist enterprise...' (pge 93). But the crucial question is whether examples such as this are relevant to the origin of life and the answer is no. Explaining the origin of life involves explaining the origin of software on the DNA molecule that codes for proteins, enzymes, etc, and Shanks and Karsai fail to explain the origin of this coded information. It is pitiful that evolutionists are still using arguments such as this that were thoroughly debunked 30 years ago.

Creationism fails to give a *supernaturalistic* origin for life with any mechanistic detail. Explaining the origin of life may not involve sophisticated cellular machinery, as this may not have arisen until later. Whatever the extent of scientific failure, creationism, which bears the greater burden of proof, has failed more extensively. Nonequilibrium thermodynamic theories of evolution were just beginning to exist "30 years ago." As explained above, Irwin is no more justified in setting a date for surrender than is Ann Coulter. Creationist arguments are yet to be "bunked." Let us hear *their* atom-by-atom, bond-by-bond history of software development. Meanwhile, the enterprise in question is sufficiently fertile to allow the existence of the Max Planck Institute for Dynamics and Self-Organization in Göttingen, Germany.

In Chapter 8, 'The Explanatory Filter, Archaeology, and Forensics', Gary Hurd presents arguments that do nothing to show that evolutionism is true, or ID is false. On page 110 Hurd mentions that the appearance of comets used to be attributed to the supernatural, implying that advances in scientific knowledge remove the need for supernatural explanations. However this is nothing but the standard evolutionist's argument of confusing origins science with operations science. Hurd spends 3.5 pages discussing forensics and concludes with: '...the entire ID rubric cannot distinguish whether these events were suicide, murder, accident, or divine retribution. Demski cannot tell you what category they belong to based on his EF. The real world is a hard place to sort out.' (pge 119) This may be true for these examples, however there is no analogy between these

examples and life, which is characterized by genetic information. Hurd mentions Paley's famous watch argument: 'Can someone without any knowledge or even awareness of metallurgy, gears or springs correctly discern the nature of the watch? Would that person necessarily recognize it to be a built object and reject a supernatural origin?' (pge 120) Hurd misses the point here, which is that machinery always has an intelligent source, it does not occur naturally.

While awaiting truth or falsehood, arithmetic shows "evolutionism" to be more parsimonious than ID, earning it presumption. Neither nature nor criminal innocence require proof. The necessary artificiality of machinery is only true if machinery is arbitrarily stipulated as artificial. With respect to nature, Irwin is merely guessing. And given the tautological impossibility of metaphysics, nothing *could* show creationism to be true.

In Chapter 9, 'Playing Games with Probability' one would expect the authors (Shallit and Elsberry) to show it is possible mathematically for the information encoded on the DNA to originate naturally. However the authors fail to address this crucial issue. The problem for evolutionism is that when naturally occurring changes are introduced to software, errors are introduced which cause the software's function to degrade and to eventually stop functioning completely.

Mutation being a fact, why would God be so stupid as to put His creation at risk by making it critically vulnerable in this way? A better engineer would make a more robust system. Supporting the fact that irreducible complexity is hard to find in the biological realm is the fact that it is unwelcome there. Completed software may react this way to errors, but the issue is the emergence of function, which cannot degrade before it exists. Biological systems are far more robust than misanalogous software.

The problem is even worse for software encoded on DNA because it is digital information. Shallit and Elsberry fail to explain the naturalistic origin of even a single protein, let alone life. Shallit and Elsberry are also wrong when they claim that events related to the origin of life are not known (pge 130). The probability of a nucleotide substitution occurring during reproduction is about 1 in a billion, which is an event, so probabilities can be calculated. No attempt is made at probability calculations, instead the authors present a series of 'red-herring' arguments.

Genetic information may be symbolically digital, but is analogue with respect to how it is replicated, transcribed and translated, and possibly with respect to its origins. Many (contemporary) proteins are trivially derived from near relatives. Creationism fails to explain the *supernaturalistic* origin "of even a single protein, let alone life," and bears the greater burden of proof. Manfred Eigen explains that diminishing mutation rates allow progressively larger genomes. The probability of a nucleotide substitution in prebiotic systems may have been closer 1 in 100.

In Chapter 10, 'Chance and Necessity - and Intelligent Design?', Taner Edis attempts to show that chance and necessity are all that are required to account for life. Edis fails totally in showing this. In fact, he barely even addresses the issue of explaining the origin

of encoded information on DNA. In one of the rare instances that he mentions this he claims ‘...all of the information we see in genetic material might be due to the initial conditions of the universe...information embedded in the microscopic physics became apparent at the macroscopic, biological level.’ If Edis believes in this absurd nonsense then the burden of proof is on him to show that this is true. Anyone who understands information knows that genetic information is an entity that is carried on the DNA molecule only.

Genetic information would be more mysterious if it were absolutely abstract and the symbolic relationship between nucleotides and amino acids exhibited no correlation with their chemical affinities. God could have chosen to use a code that lacked any such correlations, thus reducing suspicion that nature had done it. But if He wants to cover his tracks and point to nature, then so be it. Atomic physics uncontroversially becomes apparent at the macroscopic level when crystals nonmiraculously form. There exists a burden of proof only to show specific mechanisms are actual, not that they are natural, and this burden lies where it does regardless of belief. Genetic information is subsequently carried on RNA and then protein and then has macroscopic phenotypic effects. Also, reverse transcriptase causes DNA to acquire genetic information from RNA. There is also epigenetics to consider.

Edis makes feeble attempts to explain the origin of complexity with ideas such as ‘All that is important is being able to reproduce...competitors are themselves always changing.’ (pge 150), ‘...evolutionary arms races’ (pge 151), ‘...systems driven away from thermodynamic equilibrium’ (pge 151) (this produces order only, not complexity), ‘...a changing world, one in which, by accident, history [life] can take a genuinely new path’ (pge 151). However all Edis is doing is presenting a series of vague, hand-waving type arguments that do absolutely nothing to explain the origin of the DNA information that is required to explain the origin of the complexity of life.

The production of order rather than complexity is trivial, given that the two are opposites. It is at the expense of order that organization arises. Creationism makes *its* “hand-waving type arguments” even less parsimoniously. The complexity of life is explained by the second law of thermodynamics.

In Chapter 11, ‘There Is a Free Lunch after all’, Mark Perakh attempts to show that Genetic Algorithms support evolutionism. However Perakh fails to do anything of the sort. Dawkins’ METHINKS IT IS LIKE A WEASEL algorithm does not model anything real because it is a deterministic computer program that is programmed to give a specified output.

This claim of determinism is made by creationists about DNA, which even creationists consider to be real. Complex algorithms, even those intended to be deterministic, behave surprisingly, and with indeterminacy. Irwin, who, the reader will recall, himself just finished analogizing genetics to “a deterministic computer program,” now claims that the analogy does not apply. Wake this writer when Irwin has made up his mind. He then writes:

This flatly contradicts evolutionary theory, which claims that life is an accident.



This claim is made only by straw men and “does not model anything real.” Life is an accident in the same sense that people are left-handed: only partly, not exclusively. It is the principle of irreducible complexity that apparently “does not model anything real,” or at least not as many things in the biological realm as its proponent allege.

Perakh’s discussion of ‘fitness functions’ (pge 166, 167) is also misguided because to account for life requires accounting for the information that programs for new body parts such as the heart, lungs, kidneys, etc. For Genetic Algorithms to model life, random changes to the computer program’s machine instructions (not the data that the program executes) would be required. This, of course, would quickly lead to catastrophic failure of the program, not the generation of any new information.

New parts are most easily derived from old ones. The program embodied in DNA includes instructions for the machinery itself. It is precisely the changes in regulation that have greater effects than changes in structural genes, and these may not be random. Random changes are not required, as nonrandom ones are perfectly acceptable. Exon shuffling is kept from being random by the facilitation of insertion at specific sites in DNA sequences.

In Chapter 12, ‘Is the Universe Fine-Tuned for Us?’, Victor Stenger reveals that his belief in evolutionism is based on a commitment to naturalism, not because it is the inference to the best explanation.

This is a grossly false dichotomy, as naturalism is the best presumption and results from a commitment to logic and arithmetic, by which “the best explanation” is determined and recognized. It is Irwin’s commitment to *supernaturalism* that impedes his inference to the best explanation, which he sadly seems unable to distinguish from a hole in the ground.

He claims ‘...science is always hard at work trying to solve its puzzles within a materialistic framework.’ (pge 182) His faith in evolutionism is evidenced by his hand-waving speculation with statements such as ‘...we can easily imagine life based on silicon’ (pge 178), ‘...perhaps they might be able to do so in a universe with different properties and laws’ (pge 178), ‘Someday we may have the opportunity to study different forms of life that evolved on other planets’ (pge 179). However, in the conclusion Stenger claims that arguments from design for the existence of God are based on ‘...making many unjustified assumptions and being inconsistent with existing knowledge’ (pge 184). It is evolutionists who need to resort to speculation about non-observable, non-testable ‘other universes’ who are inconsistent with existing knowledge.

The subjunctivity of the statement about other planets makes it perfectly true. Speculation is necessary for progress, and nothing is to be feared about untestables, as they lead nowhere. In the deductive Popperian process of conjecture and refutation, anything may serve as a source of theories, which must then be tested. Scientists do not *need* to resort to unobservables, but religionists do, as the observation of God is inconsistent with epistemology, or if one prefers, English, it being oxymoronic. Gravity waves are only provisionally unobservable until

instrumentation allows their observation, whereas God would be disqualified as God were He to be observed. Irwin, however, implies that God *is* observable and testable. “Good luck with that.”

Chapter 13, ‘Is Intelligent Design Science?’ attempts to discredit Intelligent Design by claiming that ID is not compatible with a self-serving definition of what science is. Arguments such as these are logically flawed because such definitions of what science is are arbitrary and do absolutely nothing to show that ID is false, neither do these definitions do anything to show that evolutionism are true. The authors Perakh and Young claim: ‘What is unscientific is to decide ahead of time on the answer and search for God to come up with a positive result...Knowing the answer in advance and being immune to contrary are typical of pseudoscience.’ (pge 185) No doubt one of the reasons ID advocates don’t believe in evolutionism is because it has failed to explain the origin of life after 150 years of fruitless research (as confirmed by the abysmal evidence for evolutionism presented in this book), they have not decided ‘ahead of time’. Later in the chapter, the authors claim: ‘...we might as well throw in the towel and not even try to understand the evolution of the flagellum’ (pge 196) So who is deciding ahead of time the origin of the flagellum?! Such incredible hypocrisy.

Rather than being hypocrisy, it is logic. The *argumentum ad ignorantiam* is nonarbitrarily fallacious, and the opportunistic ignorance of this fact is “self-serving” stupidity. Victory goes to the more parsimonious proposition, just as it goes to the golfer with the lowest score, which is arbitrary only if all numbers are quantitatively equal, when in fact, 2 is less than 3, whether Irwin likes it (or knows it) or not. Logic shows not that ID is false, just worse. Presuming is not deciding, though there is nothing wrong with deciding ahead of time that 2 is less than 3. Irwin is guilty of “deciding ahead of time” and with slothful induction that “machinery always has an intelligent source, it does not occur naturally.” “So who is deciding ahead of time the origin of the flagellum?!” Certainly no one who is throwing in the towel.

In summary, the creation model of origins is the inference to the best explanation, because it is observed that intelligence is required to program software. For evolution to be credible, evolutionists have a staggering burden of proof to show that the information encoded on DNA can occur naturally. As this books shows clearly, evolutionists have failed totally in giving a naturalistic origin for life, and unless they can do this evolutionism is doomed, and self-serving definitions of science won’t be able to save evolutionism. As expected, this book also fails to give a naturalistic origin of the process of meiosis (sexual reproduction with the sperm and the egg). Of course absurd events like this don’t occur in the real world, or even in ‘other universes’!

It is the naturalism against which Irwin rails that “is the inference to the best explanation” according to arithmetic, and little is to be gained by killing the messenger who is not responsible for the fact that 2 is less than 3. The creation model of origins, with its antipathy toward presupposition, is an inference that allows no research. Darwin showed that the intelligence required to program software resides in unconscious, unforesightful nature. Creationists have a bigger burden of proof to show that anything whatsoever can occur supernaturally. Creationists criticize based on improbability, but what demonstration can they offer to show that supernatural agency is even possible, much less probable? Creationists have failed totally in giving a

supernaturalistic origin for life or of anything else, and ties go to the more parsimonious proposition. Self-service is coincidental to logic, which the self-serving fallacies of creationism lack. Irwin, as expected, also fails to give a supernaturalistic origin not merely of meiosis but of anything, offering only an example of the Philosophers' Syndrome. Nature dares not do anything that he could not foresee. Also, meiosis is the process that precedes "sexual reproduction with the sperm and the egg." Thus, defining the former as the latter is at the very least awkwardly synecdochous.

Whatever this book's failings, Irwin "fails miserably" (and hilariously) at criticizing them. He criticizes scientists for merely proposing how things *could* have happen, but offers instead nothing more than the stipulation that God *could* have done something because He is defined as omnipotent, while offering no specific mechanism. If scientists are insufficiently precise for Irwin, then let him tell exactly how God did it.

As to Irwin's charge of hypocrisy, most fundamentally, the title of the book that Irwin seeks to criticize is not *Why Science Succeeds*, but rather *Why Intelligent Design Fails*. Yet Irwin seems satisfied with attempting to criticize science and failing to acknowledge the much more egregious failure of ID.

Again, an explanation is best because it is most parsimonious. As demonstrated by arithmetic, it is phylogeny that is the inference that allows for the best explanation, as creation models do not allow character origins to be minimized to as great an extent. The creation model cannot surpass the phylogenetic one until the former is proved to model historical fact, which could only be done with a time machine. Short of that, arithmetic impartially awards victory to phylogeny. Even the best explanation is not perfect (nor are Christians, which they willingly admit). Nonetheless, creationists pretend that the imperfections of the best explanation stop it from being the best, which is false. The greater imperfections and lesser parsimony of creationism that make it worse.

A pseudonymous critic also on Amazon.com writes of the same book:

1) neo-/Darwinist critics 'jump the gun' and accuse that anyone who may suggest any supra-intelligent force for explaining consistent scientific data, is automatically classed as a "faith-based," "cultist irrational" and therefore pseudo-'scientist.'

Whatever names may be applied, it is simply wrong when an *argumentum ad ignorantiam* causes misplacement of the burden of proof. Euonymy is not achieved when something labeled science does not conform to the logical foundations thereof. It otherwise labels itself pseudoscience. It is illogical to misplace the burden of proof, which is assigned in inverse proportion to parsimony.

Unfortunately, this approach represents not a scientific but a materialist approach (ideology). Note that MODERN SCIENCE and its many disciplines have originally been developed in Christian Europe between the Renaissance and the 20th century - scientists who had even been priests, Jesuits and deeply religious Christian people. In this history of science, the materialists are but a Johnny-come-lately group, who has done more to arrest science than to help its progress.

The materialist approach is the most parsimonious and therefore correct, making it the proper logical choice for science. Worse alternatives cannot be justified by an *argumentum ad*

*antiquitatem*. Materialists are committed not so much to materialism as to the recognition of the arithmetic superiority thereof, just as criminal courts are committed merely to the presumption of innocence, not to acquittal. If the presumption of criminal innocence constituted decision, then it would preclude conviction, which it does not. With prosecutors meeting this burden of proof every day, let it not be pretended that it could be unfair to require creationists to do the same.

Materialism has allowed actual, proper science to be conducted and has properly arrested all inferior alternatives. According to impartial arithmetic, all alternative methods, new or old, are worse. Such is the legacy of William of Ockham and Immanuel Kant, who were also “deeply religious Christian people.” Ben Hubbard, professor emeritus of comparative religion at Cal State Fullerton, observes that religious belief among scientists has not decreased during the last century. (Perhaps if the personal can be separated from the professional in such cases it may be observed that religious scientists may be crazy but they are not not stupid.) Christians have done science, as have brunettes, but, to the extent that they have done science *correctly*, their Christianity has been merely coincidental and no more relevant than the color of their eyes or hair. Henry Ward Beecher called himself a “cordial Christian Darwinist.” Johnny-come-early “scientists” are the same people who “arrested” science by deciding ahead of time that comets must be in the atmosphere because of the supposed order and perfection of the heavens. Quantum physics has succeeded in spite of being recent because it is never too late to improve.

Definitely, a new alternative method must be found, and the Intelligent Design scientists are the only ones on the field today.

Logic demonstrates the superiority of the method employed by science, and alternatives, new or old, are worse and are needed only for the purpose of trying to prove what is not true. For creationists, if the truth hurts, seek “a new alternative” to it.

2) Neo-/Darwinists have yet to provide, after more than 20 years, an alternate scientifically verifiable explanation or solution, to that provided by ID scientists.

They need not, any more than a criminal defendant needs to prove his innocence. It is creationists who would retard progress by the bogus application of deadlines, such that quantum mechanics would not have been allowed for due to its lack of punctuality.

This shows that the problem lies with the pre-ID scientists and theorists and not with the ID scientists, who based on rapidly accumulating evidence, have designed a highly workable hypothesis that provides verifiable solutions - Intelligent Design.

Even allowing for positivist verifiability, it is, tautologically, impossible to verify the existence of any qualities, including intelligence, outside of nature. Any process of elimination applies merely to the mind of the victim of the Philosophers’ Syndrome. It is only the failure of ID scientists’ imaginations that is verifiable.

On the same site, J. O’Donnell writes:

The book makes some nearly silly arguments an example of this is as follows. At a point early in the book the author takes a stab at Behe’s mouse trap example the author clearly does not like this example, O.K., but he then makes a statement that I found ridiculous he

said if the analogy is poor then the theory must be wrong. Imagine if a scientist at any point in time made a poor analogy of how gravity worked? According to this author we would all cease to be held to the planet. Poor analogies do not unavoidably equal poor theories. I am sure I have made poor analogies in the past; many people have, including possibly the author of this book.

The point is not the use of a poor analogy but of a false one. Let the mousetrap function arise in a mechanism comprised of thousands of parts. Then allow the deterioration of all parts not involved in the mouse trap. Poor analogies yield good theories only by accident, for all that matters is how well reality is explained.

The author is guilty of the same thing that he claims creationists are guilty of the difference being that creationists use God to fill the gaps, in other words inserting God into any of the unexplainable portions of how things have come to be. Whereas the author does not use God to fill gaps rather when it comes to something he cannot explain he says “it could have happened this way” or “might have evolved that way” or perhaps he avoids it all together and does nothing to satisfy why something happened or even might have happened.

God of the Gaps is actually not “the same thing” but something worse, as are Guilt of the Gaps and Magic of the Gaps.

For example he does a good job of explaining how he thinks an eye could have developed thru a series of slight modification he indicates that a relatively undeveloped eye would have been one that could identify light direction and the receptacle for such an eye would be bowl shaped. But the author does nothing explain how the cells would have started to form themselves in a bowl shape prior to being that way.

Tissues normally “form themselves in a bowl shape” during gastrulation. An existing mechanism would simply need to occur at a novel time and place. As a result, the optic cup, like the gastrula, forms a bowl.

Or why they would have known to start to become bowl shaped to make an eye. My understanding is that a bowl shape is not a natural shape that cells would form themselves to.

Individual cells lack mentality. Even contemporary cells destined to become a human eye do not realize they are doing so, and are not acting “to make an eye.” A bird, which does enjoy a certain level of mentality, flies within a flock with no concept of the large-scale pattern formed by the flock as a whole. The behavior of individual birds is determined by simple rules regarding the behavior of neighboring birds. Invagination is standard ontogenetic behavior. Any organism large enough to accommodate an eye will have already undergone gastrulation as an embryo. Thus would this already be “natural” cellular behavior.

How did the cells know to become bowl shaped?

Darwinism stipulates that cells did not “know,” so ask elsewhere. In Darwinian terms, cells would have done things unknowingly and been given feedback afterward. Even when shape is not genetically specified, cells “know” to become spherical by responding to physical forces such that the lowest potential energy structure is adopted.

Evolutionist saying it just happened or could have happened this way is logically no different than the creationist who says because God made it that way.

This is at best an *argumentum ad ignorantiam* and *tu quoque* fallacy. Actually, scientists employ the more parsimonious (and therefore superior) presupposition, making a real, arithmetic difference. Nature, unlike its alternatives, needs no proof, and scientists lack the requisite stupidity to imitate the misbehavior of cut-and-run creationists.

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Evolution elicits folly like few other topics, and being a *flaneur*, this writer enjoys taking notice. Sean Hannity is fond of citing liberal folly and saying, “See how liberals think?” For those seeking examples of how conservatives do not, a glimpse into some conservative minds, including the minds of some who volunteer as intentional representative spokespersons, will now be offered. (Also included will be some opportunistic topical exploitation of people who may be right but who may not quite understand why or who do not express themselves well.)

To be fair, these concrete examples of intellectual road kill are just so much low-hanging fruit and so many fish in a barrel. Sociologically, they will help expose students to some of the challenges that confront them in their intellectual lives, while reinforcing some of the lessons presented above. As usual, Bruce Tinsley functions as a particularly convenient punching bag, his *Mallard Fillmore* cartoons serving as an abundant source of logical infelicities, intellectual delinquency and apparently unexamined, self-parodic irony.

These essays are not meant to have a political dimension, for the goal is to be neither conservative nor liberal but logical. Having never studied political science, this writer stipulates that conservatism may represent absolutely correct political theory, and also that both liberals and conservatives are capable of folly. However, when one looks beyond the realm of politics (or at least within the domain of science), the folly of liberals tends not to stop them from being right, even if only by accident, while that of conservatives tends to cause them to be wrong and unaware of it. Thus does conservatism provide a more target-rich environment because conservatives (collectively) are more efficient providers of nonpolitical corrigenda.

In reviewing the book *Einstein's Mistakes* by Hans C. Ohanian, George Johnson, in the *Los Angeles Times*, 10/12/08, quotes the author as saying the physicist had “‘a mystical intuitive approach to physics’ that led him to the right answers – if not always by the right path.” This may be related to the phenomenon known as a Kinsleyan gaffe, which is when a politician tells the truth. Those who are merely accidentally right may deserve neither bragging rights nor a medal, but those who are wrong deserve even less. To borrow a phrase, this writer is not laughing *at* them, but *near* them.

William F. Buckley said that the press usually analyze liberals but diagnose conservatives. Diagnosis is indeed appropriate when confronted by a pathetic and futile attempt to

depathologize fallacy. In the *Los Angeles Times*, 2/26/08, Jonah Goldberg writes that “being a radical means never having to say you’re sorry.” Apparently, being a conservative means seldom being capable of recognizing the need to apologize, but often enjoying opportunistically self-granted social promotion. Whatever the virtues of conservatism, it does not license stupidity, just as a creationist is not exonerated by registering as a Democrat. The examples given below are not necessarily offered as mere *tu quoque* arguments, nor even as arguments for the forfeiture by conservatives of grounds for criticism, but to demonstrate their blind spot regarding their own faults (Matt 7:5, Luke 6:42).

On his radio program 9/25/08, Michael Medved stated that even irrelevant criticism is permissible toward those whom one does not respect, explaining that this is why he ridicules the silly baby names chosen by Hollywood celebrities but not those chosen by conservative politicians. Therefore, any inferred political asymmetry in the criticism offered by this writer does, if nothing else, meet with Medved’s standards. And again, this writer in no way claims to know better than conservatives *about politics*. Whatever valid conservative arguments exist will be allowed to stand on their own merit.

Examples are arrayed thematically and chronologically, beginning with instances of general folly as well as of wisdom that conservatives have not consistently applied in certain contexts, followed by additional specific topics.

*“Écoute bien ceci: nous allons voir, docteur, la bestialité dans toute sa candeur.”*

In the cartoon of 1/15/03, Mallard offers his New Year’s prediction #65: “The Justice Department will begin tracking internet use of the term ‘meta’ in order to monitor the activities of trendy pseudo-intellectuals.” How they are to be distinguished from genuine intellectuals, who understand the proper use of the term, is not specified. *Excessive* use or *misuse* might be a red flag, but Mallard only says that use *per se* is an issue, as if he takes exception to its use as a prefix in *metamorphosis*, *metaphysics*, *metastasis*, *metacarpus* and *metatarsus*. A man, apparently the Attorney General, is then seen saying, “They’re not a security threat or anything. They’re just really annoying.” One should be equally annoyed by those too stupid to recognize proper linguistic usage and those like Mallard who dangle prepositions and split infinitives. According to conservatives, merely being annoyed by one’s intellectual superiors is not an excuse for being socially promoted to their level.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 7/14/03, Ann Telling writes of Ann Coulter, “All Americans should read the book for themselves, look at her facts and then decide for themselves whether her evidence is credible.” Limiting the suggestion to one nationality is impertinently parochial. The consideration of only *her* facts in a vacuum should not be done by *all* Americans, but only by idiots. Civilized beings consider all available relevant data. If the issue were mere credibility, then the term “facts” would not be applicable until after the truth of her assertions was established. If science involved credibility, then cold fusion might be in the text books. Credibility is only an issue for people too stupid to evaluate things for themselves.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 5/3/04, Christopher Grisanti writes, “What I don’t understand is why, despite the fact that the vast majority of Americans consider themselves Christians, we cave in to the demands of the whining minority.” The writer’s failure to understand is a fundamental part of the problem. Whining is not the issue. The majority may rule, but the *argumentum ad populum* is fallacious. Contests typically have only one winner. Therefore, the vast majority of all contestants are losers, who, properly, should yield to a *winning*

minority (*palmas qui meruit ferat*). It is only political correctness and multiculturalism that allow losers to rationalize their loss as a source of pride and smugly celebrate their inferiority. The writer concludes, “Thanks, ACLU, for responding to the two citizens in Redlands who complained about the cross in the city emblem. I hope they’re happy.” The hope should be for propriety, not happiness. This writer hopes that right has been done, whether or not *anyone* is happy about it. Those who would deny people rescue from a rare problem forfeit their right to be similarly rescued.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 6/1/04, Patrick Goldstein writes, “When I asked [Cal] Thomas if he’d seen *Saved!* before writing his column, he responded: ‘No, but I didn’t really need to, because I know the way Hollywood thinks about religion.’” Why, then, bother reading the Bible or visiting Kansas when one can just use the “Cal Thomas defense?” Thomas went on to add the potential *argumentum ad populum* that Hollywood is out of touch with “real America.” So, too, are proper grammar, opera and quantum mechanics. They all have merit nevertheless.

Robert Waterbor offers a false dichotomy when he writes in the *Los Angeles Times*, 7/10/04, that “conservatism is a reputable sociopolitical philosophy . . . and not . . . a ruse used by greedy capitalists to opiate the masses,” as if these alternatives were mutually exclusive.

For example, in the cartoon of 8/1/04, Mallard announces, “A new study shows that people with degrees in other subjects often make better teachers than those with education degrees.” Mallard fails to specify whether they do so *as* often as they make worse ones. Were he able to make such a claim, it is assumed that he would. Those who can, do. (And perhaps those who cannot, draw cartoons.) Instead, Mallard makes a statement that is perfectly consistent with the net inferiority of those without education degrees. This is not an example of lying with statistics (as per Darrell Huff’s 1954 book *How to Lie With Statistics*), but of lying about having employed statistics at all. It is also easily demonstrable that gay people *often* make better parents than straight people, though this is probably insufficiently convenient for Tinsley to care.

Similarly, in the cartoon of 9/10/04, the assertion is made that “the rich have paid more taxes since the Bush tax cuts!” It is not specified whether the rich have paid *as much* more as have the poor. The presumption can only have been that there exists a target audience with the requisite stupidity to believe that this assertion contains sufficient data to support a valid and interesting conclusion. It is this portion of the population that would be most easily replaced by robots, and the sooner, the better.

Having approved of teachers who lack education degrees (8/1/04), Mallard, in the cartoon of 8/12/05, says, “17 members of the space-shuttle project have announced that, in fact, they’ve never studied aeronautical engineering.” It would be interesting to determine how many government officials have no degrees in political science. It was a conservative president who nominated Harriet Meyers to the Supreme Court. Also, “the space-shuttle project” has room for many more than “17 members” who are experts and mission specialists in fields other than aeronautical engineering, such as medicine.

In his cartoon of 10/14/04, Michael Ramirez disparages John Kerry for merely echoing Tom Ridge’s advice to go on with our lives and continue normal activities without preoccupation. Three days later (10/17/04), Ramirez ridicules senator Mark Dayton for being afraid of terrorists. Ramirez, like Tinsley, makes deconstructive criticism a breeze by providing vanishingly few challenges in the Derridean search for contradictions and self-undercutting argument. They seem not to realize that inconsistent propositions cannot possibly all be true collectively.



In the cartoon of 10/17/04, Mallard cites “actual research,” which is what earns one a Nobel prize. However, when confronted with the assertions of Nobel laureates, Rush Limbaugh once said, “Who cares what *they* think?” What is good for the goose is good for the gander (and the mallard). Tinsley advocates “rational conversation,” but when he cites a correlation between watching “sexually explicit TV programs” and sexual activity, he demonstrates the results of not watching science by failing to quantify “a lot” and “more,” though he does at least cite the study in question. He would be wise to learn from Joe Martin’s *Mr. Boffo* cartoon of 7/7/06, in which one scientist in what is labeled the “micro-bio-tech research dept” tells the others, “I’ll tell you the problem. The problem is we all have a different interpretation of what the word ‘tad’ means.” Among theologians, no “actual research” is possible, except of the literary variety.

Writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, 10/18/04, Andrew Klavan bemoans “the incredibly uniform outlook of mainstream intellectuals.” This could be explained by their being obviously right, as when they hold that  $2+2=4$ . Also, there is no need whatever to settle for the mainstream. “Traditionalist values,” Klavan asserts, are underrepresented in popular culture. Being an author himself, he is free to write his own book, even if fallaciously based on the *argumentum ad antiquitatem*. Klavan attempts to make the tautological claim that “their opinions are just opinions, that their ideology is, in fact, an ideology and that good and reasonable people can disagree.” However good people may be, they are not reasonable if they disagree about arithmetic. “We are all entitled to our opinions, but not our own facts,” said the late Sen. Daniel Patrick Moynihan. Rational people can disagree only about the irrational. It is up to the subject to decide whether or not broccoli tastes good. However, either  $2+2=4$  or you are an idiot. Klavan’s demand for false humility sounds like philosophical inferiority being rationalized as disagreement, driven by those whom James D. Squires calls “boorish anti-intellectual counterelitists,” who would perhaps celebrate what Richard Schickel calls “artlessness for artlessness’ sake.” Civilization exerts an upward cultural force in the direction of improvement, with the idea of overeducation being held as oxymoronic. Let all improve or be left behind.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 11/12/04, Bill G. Aldridge, former executive director of the National Science Teachers Association, writes of facts “about how life-forms changed over the last several hundred thousand years on Earth.” *Several* hardly begins to cover the four orders of magnitude implied, as terrestrial life seems to have existed for billions of years. “‘Creationism’ theories,” he claims, “explain none of the facts, and that is why science rejects such nonsensical theories.” Creationism may actually explain all the facts, just as a blind, wheelchair-bound person may complete a round of golf. In each case, however, a far worse job is done compared to professionals (*Il faut attendre le boiteux*).

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 11/16/04, Marvin Haas writes, “Those leftist Hollywood types will soon try to have us believing that Methuselah didn’t live to age 900, and Jonah never lived in the stomach of a large fish.” If logic has not managed to do it, then Hollywood’s efforts would be futile and wasted. Withholding social promotion should solve the problem nicely. Methuselah and Jonah did indeed do what Haas believes they did, but only in the same literary sense that Hamlet is Danish. Belief in anything more than that requires faith because such belief is unearned.

The cartoon of 11/17/04 defines the “the CBS news approach” as, “We don’t care if its [sic] not true. We’re sticking to it!” For creationists, sociological utility, such as the prevention of crime among brute savages, overrides any considerations of truth. Thus, the corresponding creationism approach would be: “If the truth promotes crime, then lie.” This is a form of peace-at-any-price appeasement, even at the cost of civilization. “Do we really want our children to

believe that we came from lucky mud or primordial ooze?” asked one creationists. God forbid truth should factor into what children believe. Civilized people are those who can and do recognize the truth, and yet do not misbehave. To the extent that children are brutes, perhaps they should believe whatever will constrain their savagery and prevent crime.

The cartoon of 11/21/04 shows a group of people unable to cook a turkey: “One more thing that women’s studies degree is no help with,” as if a degree in political science would. Perhaps Mallard would be happy if women’s studies consisted of home economics, a woman’s place being in the kitchen.

In the cartoon of 12/02/04, Mallard complains, “This fund-raising wrapping paper costs four times as much as wrapping paper in stores!” Would that conservatives could all import such parsimony into their scientific explanations. Plus, how are funds to be raised except from within the profit margin?

In the cartoon of 12/11/04, A celestial voice says to shepherds, “and, some not-so-great tidings . . . . One day, the media will portray His followers as a bunch of narrow-minded, intolerant zealots.” The voice never bothers to characterize the media’s portrayal as inaccurate or unjust. That such people exist among His followers is ineluctably the case, leaving us only to quibble about numbers. Tinsley’s portrayals of liberals are seldom any less sweeping.

In the cartoon of 12/15/04, an announcer tells the TV audience that compared to the programming for the red states, “those in the blue states will get something a bit more value-neutral.” A certain value neutrality would benefit those in the red states who suffer from value inferiority. It is also the only thing keeping creationism alive.

In the cartoon of 1/6/05, Tinsley ridicules academics for rejecting political diversity, thus forfeiting his right to reject others on the basis of political disagreement.

In the cartoon of 1/29/05, it is reported, “An independent commission has found no evidence of political motivation for CBS News’ mishandling of its George Bush-National Guard story, citing the fact that both Dan Rather and his producer, Mary Mapes, denied such bias, prompting Scott Peterson to remark, ‘Wow, I wish those commission guys had been on my jury.’” The joke can only work if no other evidence existed against Peterson, which is not the case. Nor need Tinsley bother denying his own shortcomings.

In the cartoon of 2/20/05, Tinsley invents a straw man in the form of “the Zeitgeist,” to whom Mallard attributes both the celebration of diversity and an aversion to the notion of human sexual dimorphism. The celebration or condemnation of real differences would seem perfectly reasonable in contrast to that of illusory or imaginary ones. “[W]ondering whether men and women are inherently different” is reasonable, and certain differences are obvious and justify the separate labels of *men* and *women*. However, beyond that, the burden of proof lies with the project of showing grounds for rejecting the null hypothesis, which, in many respects, is not going at all well. In the *Los Angeles Times*, 10/2/06, Caryl Rivers and Rosalind C. Barnett report on the absence in the scientific literature of demonstrated differences in boys and girls with respect to audition and vision, the structure of the corpus callosum, attention toward people vs inanimate objects, and the relative use of deductive and inductive reasoning. Were they to be demonstrated, such differences would help explain why Ann Coulter so often eats this writer’s dust. Ultimately, let not the Zeitgeist be equated with those of us smart enough to know where the burden of proof lies.

Mallard claims a difference “between Zeitgeists’ logical-reasoning skills and those of sane people.” After distinguishing the Zeitgeist from the sane, Tinsley mockingly has the former say, “Hate speech!” Tinsley thus forfeits any claim to libel resulting from the observation that he

frequently demonstrates a similar distinction with respect to *himself* and the sane, or at least those who outperform him cognitively. Paraphrasing Clint Eastwood's Frankie Dunn in *Million Dollar Baby*, "Ducky, sane ain't enough." Additionally, such skills are explicitly not enjoyed by Tinsley's target audience.

Tinsley himself consistently fails to meet the standards of logic itself, but does provide myriad examples of logical corrigenda and failure modes on which students may practice. For this reason, this writer celebrates him as a dust-eating straight man and pathetically easy target. (On that point, in the cartoon of 6/22/05, Mallard says, "WFDR News has learned that providing Medicaid-funded Viagra to convicted sex offenders was actually a clever calculated strategy designed to make other government programs look good by comparison." This writer uses Bruce Tinsley for the same purpose. As Alan Dundes once said, "It may be that your sole purpose in life is simply to serve as a warning to others.")

Beyond their entertainment value, Tinsley's shortcomings are of very little practical use, except for the formation of prejudice. Even if men and liberals were shown to be respectively smarter than women and conservatives, it would be wrong to assume that any particular woman or conservative must necessarily be less intelligent than any man or liberal, respectively. People should be allowed to demonstrate their individual inadequacies on their own, and Tinsley's work speaks for itself.

In the cartoon of 2/25/05, Mallard says, "I prefer the People's Choice Awards. The Oscars are all about a bunch of insiders who think they know way more than we average guys." Mallard actually (and delightfully) takes pride in being uncredentialed. He does not deny that the people involved with the Oscars *actually* know more, as if just thinking so were wrong even if true. Previously (2/20/05), Tinsley approves of "wondering whether men and women are inherently different." He must necessarily also allow for inherent differences between "average guys" and others. The concept of an average is only applicable within a distribution. Some people know more than others, even according to Tinsley, or else he would have no basis for using the word "average." However much it may trouble some people, knowledge happens. SAT scores vary, and not just because of differing amounts of sleep the night before. Conservatives who decry the coarsening of the culture only embarrass themselves when they then rationalize the culture's coarsest elements by means of an *argumentum ad populum*. "Average guys" regularly mistake preference for knowledge, and have not distinguished themselves by indulging in Shakespeare or Beethoven as much as in NASCAR. Very simply, as per Sturgeon's Law, most culture is no more than Purina Human Chow.

In the cartoon of 2/27/05, making fun of the tedium of the Oscar broadcast, Tinsley has someone on television say, "The nominees for best cinematography in an art film seen by four people are . . ." This *argumentum ad populum* asserts the impropriety of honoring the work of Mozart or Beethoven in favor of the work of almost any rapper. The very next day (2/28/05), Tinsley attributes to liberals the opinion that the "dead white males . . . who once cluttered up ancient U.S. textbooks" are "irrelevant," as a character indicates a figure who may be Shakespeare. Sincerity would cause it to be wrong of him to have dismissed obscure art the previous day. Who is Tinsley to say that art that is now new cannot, even in principle, be widely cherished in the future? Schubert had very little popular success in his lifetime. With his cartoon of the 27th, Tinsley, according even to his standard, forfeits his right to claim Schubert as a dead white male of value.

In the cartoon of 3/1/05, sexual orientation is defined as "The only human attribute that liberals think is genetic. Everything else is cultural." Neither genetics nor culture excuse

Tinsley's capricious inconsistencies and logical failings. If his failures are a matter of preference rather than orientation, then he eats this writer's dust with respect to both achievement and aspiration. If an orientation, then he is to be pitied, but not socially promoted.

In the cartoon of 3/4/05, Mallard contends that the liberal love of diversity does not extend to politics. There is little reason not to celebrate diversity in the absence of differential value. However, celebration of diversity should not degenerate beyond tolerance into approval of inferiority, as per the Prager Doctrine. Diversity certainly occurs with respect to intelligence, but that should not give rise to social promotion. Conservatives sometimes take the Goldie Locks approach to intelligence by speaking of the degradation of culture while also referring disparagingly of the elite. For true intellectuals, the problem is one of maximization, not optimization.

In the cartoon of 3/5/05, *Labels* is defined as "something that liberals are just categorically opposed to, except when they're doing the labeling." A model liberal says, "You know, I'm just far too sophisticated to use labels! Labels are for those right-wing, Neanderthal, racist, sexist, fascist, homophobic . . ." Nothing is wrong with using labels *accurately*. Racism, sexism, fascism and homophobia are indefensible, so it is hoped that Tinsley is not trying to defend them. Wrong occurs in using labels irrelevantly, as when the equation  $2+2=4$  is not believed because it was taught to one by a lesbian. Some people are indeed far too sophisticated to commit fallacies, such as the preceding *argumentum ad hominem*. In this instance, Tinsley merely demonstrates that he is not too sophisticated to leave a preposition dangling or to avoid a disagreement in number.

The cartoon of 3/21/05 is an example of what Mallard derides as "an insipid anachronism." Only weeks earlier (1/10/05), he tries to defend his use of a dial-up modem. Ironically, broadband internet service is the remedy for another of Mallard's complaints. In the cartoon of 3/8/06, Mallard says, "Sir, isn't this H.H.S. 'conference' in Disney World actually just a waste of taxpayers' money?" A man replies, "On the contrary, we're actually *saving* the taxpayers money!" When asked to explain, he says, "'cause at first, we were gonna have it in Paris!" In the cartoon the next day, 3/9/06, Mallard says, "Are you aware that, over the past five years, federal agencies have spent almost one-and-a-half *billion* dollars on 'conferences' like this one, to fancy vacation spots?" The other character says, "Why no, that's *appalling!* My agency needs to review that! . . . at a conference . . . maybe in Hawaii . . . or Monaco . . . I here the Caribbean's nice this time of year." High-speed internet service allows conferencing without anyone going anywhere. Data are moved much faster and less expensively than people.

Catholic League president William Donohue (4/1/05) denounced postmodernists who deny the existence of truth. Equally regrettable are premodernists who acknowledge the existence of truth, but then fail to recognize it when staring it in the face.

In the cartoon of 4/27/05, it is asserted that "women earn the same as men. Sometimes more." As with the races, when the genders are compared with any distributed property such as height or weight, "sometimes" women will be taller or heavier than particular men. This is in no way inconsistent with a lower average in any parameter compared to the other group. Tinsley pretends to cite a source for this comparison, but refers only to a writer's column, not to the source of the findings. He thus offers mere hearsay.

In the cartoon of 4/28/05, Mallard implies that "men and women with comparable jobs earn the same money," then characterizes as mythology the notion that "women make 75 cents for every dollar men make," as if the two statements were incompatible. Considered as an entire gender, women are perfectly capable of earning as much as men when they have similar jobs,

and also having lower paying jobs on average due to fewer of them having high-paying jobs and more of them having lower-paying ones, which is explicitly allowed for by Tinsley in the cartoon of 10/16/05. That is, for all high-paying jobs enjoyed by men, there may be fewer women occupying “comparable jobs,” assuming *comparable* is defined narrowly to mean similar (see criticism of Dennis Prager on this point). Using Tinsley’s phrase of comparing “apples to apples,” women may simply have fewer apples to bring to the comparison. Even if equal pay for equal work is stipulated, women may still have only three-fourths as much “equal work.” Tinsley never asserts that women as a whole earn as much as men as a whole. He regards any discrepancy as mythological, though, contrastingly, he himself (2/20/05) warrants “wondering whether men and women are inherently different.” It is not clear to this writer why people unable to perceive these statistical distinctions within Tinsley’s pseudocomparisons should be allowed *into* high school.

In the cartoon of 4/29/05, Mallard reports that “college-educated men who’ve never married only make 85 percent of what comparable women earn and, as far back as the early 1980s, the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics found that companies paid men and women the same for the same jobs!” He himself demonstrates how, by cherry picking, a disparity in pay can exist within a population that is claimed to receive equal pay for equal work. Similarly, examples of equality can be discovered within a population in which one entire gender receives less pay than the other. Particular women can always be found who are taller, heavier, smarter and richer than particular men. But statistics exist to prevent the forming of superstitions based on such anecdotal data. If more men than women have a hypothetical, high-paying “same job,” then the men will collectively make more money. Mallard asks why “media-types continue to live in the past.” Living in the past was good enough for him when it came to a dial-up internet connection (1/10/05) and will be when he tells students (8/7/06), “Don’t read interesting books by ‘dead, white males’ over the summer. This will only make your required school reading seem even more dull by comparison.” The question is why anyone would choose to live in stupidity. Mallard may have a perfectly valid point to make, but either refuses or is just too stupid to be able to pose it properly. Perhaps this is merely indicative of the inherent inferiority of anatine intelligence. Tinsley allows for such things in the cartoon of 4/7/06, in which a dinosaur wears a sign reading “Brain the size of a Pea.”

In this regard, Tinsley’s choice of model is revealing. George Pendle writes of Millard Fillmore in the *Los Angeles Times*, 2/19/07, “*American History Review* declared that he had ‘neither brains nor gall.’ *American Heritage* magazine said that ‘to discuss Millard Fillmore is to overrate him.’ Even the White House’s official website ([www.whitehouse.gov](http://www.whitehouse.gov)) damns him with the faintest of praise: ‘Millard Fillmore demonstrated that through methodical industry and some competence an uninspiring man could make the American dream come true.’”

In the cartoon of 4/20/05, A character says, “We progressives are better than you because we’re more compassionate! Especially toward minorities! Except the unborn and incapacitated minorities, of course.” Dog leash polarity is determined by intelligence, not compassion. Tinsley cites only the bathwater and not the baby, so that the *net* compassion of progressives relative to conservatives is indeterminate within the cartoon. He thus fails to refute the proposition that progressives are the superiors of conservatives.

In the cartoon of 4/30/05, Mallard asks, “Should we be reporting the tired old conventional wisdom or fresh data that say women are now *15 times* more likely than men to become top executives in big corporations before age 40?!” By again citing only some other person’s column rather than the primary source, Mallard is certainly not doing any such reporting

here. It remains mere hearsay. As to women's chances *after* age 40, Mallard allows for compensatory failure that would result in a lower net rate of promotion. Even if women are 15 times more likely to succeed when young, are they 30 times *less* likely to succeed when older? Are they in fact less likely than men overall to achieve such promotion? On that, Mallard is suspiciously silent, his cherry picking again suggesting either cowardice or stupidity.

In a story in the *Los Angeles Times*, 5/6/05, Kansas state board of education member Kathy Martin is quoted as saying, "Evolution is a great theory, but it is flawed." This is an accent fallacy, as all theories are inevitably imperfect. The point is that this particular theory is less flawed than its competition. (As John Johnson recounts in the *Los Angeles Times*, 4/13/08, the Standard Model of physics is flawed, but is also the most successful scientific theory in history.) Specifically, the pot calls the sugar black when talk of the flaws of evolutionary theory ironically comes from proponents of a model built exclusively on homoplasy. (All homoplasy is ad hoc hypothesizing, and God is the ultimate ad hoc hypothesis; the epicycle of epicycles. Thus is creationism the result of minimally parsimonious desperation in pursuit of comfort.) This is similar to when evolution is called "just a theory," as is the germ theory of disease, but this is not meant to allow for the possibility that bacteria do not exist. Martin also says, "We can't ignore that our nation is based on Christianity – not science." Even if we cannot ignore it, we can improve it. Science is based on logic, which is prior to our nation and to every other, and religion is ontologically and epistemologically irrelevant. A proposal was made to "alter the definition of science" by those loath to redefine marriage. William Harris says, "Part of our overall goal is to remove the bias against religion that is in our schools." The proper bias is against failure. If religion correlates with failure, then let it stop. He also says, "This is a science controversy that has powerful religious implications," which is impossible, as faith is not subject to standards of fact and science. Opponents want to "challenge" evolutionary theory, the challengers all being worse. As per the Radio Shack principle, questions produce no sweat for those who have answers. Biologist Jonathan Wells is shown trying to discredit evolution by quoting Charles Darwin as saying that certain events "at present must remain inexplicable." The time referred to by Darwin as "at present" has long since passed. Wells may not have advanced his knowledge of biology beyond the nineteenth century, but others, whose dust Wells is invited to eat, have. What remains inexplicable to this day is how natural effects could have supernatural causes. Such explanations remain, properly, not the logical last resort, but none at all.

In the cartoon of 5/6/05, A character says, "There was actually a time when people didn't publish their memoirs unless their lives were 'interesting'! . . . Thank goodness we've put those dark, elitist days behind us!" Tinsley seems to be ridiculing this character, though the latter is espousing the conservative stance of letting the market decide the subjective issue of what is "interesting." Tinsley often disparages those who would characterize themselves as "elite," but here supports the word's euonymy by disparaging a character who balks at the concept. Differential entertainment value certainly exists among memoirs, as it also does among cartoons. Mallard piggybacks along with other cartoons and the rest of the newspaper, with no line-item veto for the costumer, who must pay for the entire paper, even those parts that go unread.

In the cartoon of 5/9/05, Mallard thinks, "I'll sleep better knowing that, even as I read this, millions of school kids who can barely read, write or count, and have no idea when, or what, World War II was are spending their days, and or tax dollars, memorizing a new 'food pyramid.'" Meanwhile, Mallard is spending *his* time whining about people writing their memoirs and flashing peace signs, not to mention food pyramids.

In the cartoon of 5/10/05, a character says, “Many of you have asked why we here at the Agriculture Department keep changing the ‘food pyramid’! That’s easy! People’s health needs are constantly changing. Their eating habits are changing. Plus, we’ve got to justify our big ol’ honkin’ food-pyramid budget somehow.” Applying that same standard to cartoonists, Tinsley calls into question the justification for his own salary, given how seldom his jokes change (*argumentum ad nauseum*). The reason a food pyramid would be expected to change is the same reason that scholarly journals remain in print to this day: because science is not yet finished, not that it necessarily ever could be.

On 5/11/05, Mallard says, “The Agriculture Department has replaced the old ‘food pyramid’ with a new collection of six different pyramids, which will, of course, be overseen and coordinated by the administration’s new ‘food-pyramid czar.’” Meanwhile, Mallard will function as the food-pyramid complaint czar.

On 5/12/05, Mallard says, “Can you explain to our viewers why the new food pyramid is better than the old one?” The other character responds, “It’s newer, Mallard. The old one was a lot, you know, older!” Mallard says, “And that’s an adequate reason for all of this energy and expense?” The other character says, “You’ve never worked for the government, have you?” The accusation of an *argumentum ad novitatem* would be valid if true, but it is very unlikely. It would not be an adequate excuse, but improved science always is. It is the nature of science to grow, expand and improve. Since conservatism entails conserving the status quo, leave it to a conservative to discount the phenomenon of learning.

On 5/13/05, a caption reads, “At the Agriculture Department’s Research and Development Division:” as a character thinks, “‘The food rectangle.’ ‘The food trapezoid.’ ‘The food obelisk.’” Anyone who considers such thinking frivolous *per se* is directed to the book *The Visual Display of Quantitative Information* by Edward R. Tufte.

In the cartoon of 5/14/05, Mallard thinks, “This is typical. They come up with an entirely new ‘food pyramid’ just when I’d finally gotten comfortable ignoring the old one.” One also tends to get not just comfortable ignoring the food pyramid, but unhealthy as well.

For students of logic, the cartoon of 6/26/05 provides an excellent test. In it, a dinosaur says, “Mallard, as everyone knows, our society, and particularly the education establishment, oppresses women. Boys get preferential treatment in class, do better in school, and go on to college more often.” Mallard replies, “Actually, 57 percent of this year’s college grads are women, and, more than 2/3 of master’s degrees went to women, while boys are 1/3 more likely to drop out of high school!” As if it would help, the Department of Education is cited. Mallard’s response takes the form that would be expected for a contradiction, which it sadly is not. A higher percentage of female college graduates is in no way inconsistent with a higher rate of male admission, given that the men are free to drop out subsequent to admission. Women may take a majority of master’s degrees because men do not settle for them and continue on to earn Ph.D.s, while women fail to follow them that far. Even the drop-out rate for high school does not preclude college attendance, though a statistical correlation would be expected. Nevertheless, remaining in high school is falsely equated with going to college. And the dropping out of boys in no way entails girls going on to college, as they are perfectly free to leave academia after high school. Do girls “actually” enter college at a rate similar to that of boys, and do women earn as many Ph.D.s as men? The answers to these questions are needed for the rebuttal that Mallard seems to think he is making. However, significantly, on these relevant matters, he is suspiciously silent, mouthing only irrelevancies, at least with respect to the specific statement he would rebut. Truth is not enough. He may also wish to state that George Washington was the first president,

which would be true, but has nothing to do with the issue at hand. Going to college *per se* is less important than learning to identify errors of reasoning like Tinsley's. With or without a college education, failure to recognize such errors is shameful and surmountable only by social promotion. Even given the luxury of constructing his own fictional straw man so as to complement exactly the statistics that he wished to cite, he fails to achieve rebuttal and expects his audience to be too stupid to recognize the failure of his artifice. Indeed, in the cartoon of 7/10/05, a character says, "Proving once again the age-old axiom that, when it comes to surveys, 'it all depends on how the question is worded.'" Unfortunately, Tinsley seems unable to word a straw man's statement in such a way that Tinsley's available ammunition will constitute a rebuttal. However, having failed to contradict the dinosaur, Mallard does manage (apparently unwittingly) to contradict himself, as he finally says to the dinosaur, "You're livin' in the past, as usual." Tinsley's celebration of doing just that was on display just weeks earlier, when he spends 5/9-13/05, particularly the 12th, ridiculing the Agriculture Department for *not* "livin' in the past."

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 6/26/05, Laura Leyva chides Simon Singh for "stating that the steady-state theory is 'fundamentally wrong.' How do you know that?" One might know it by arithmetic. Also, how does Leyva know otherwise? She concludes, "The Catholic Church condemned Galileo, and we all know how 'fundamentally wrong' it was." How does *she* know *that*? Thus, apparently, the Catholic Church can be wrong, but the steady-state theory cannot be.

In the cartoon of 6/29/05, Mallard says, "Democratic National Committee chairman Howard Dean continues to get strong support for keeping his job . . . from Republicans." Dean himself is seen to say, "Woooo! I'm not unstable! Woooo!" Logicians have reason to celebrate Tinsley as a source of corrigenda for their students.

In the cartoon of 7/6/05, Mallard asserts that his appearance in the book *America* by Jon Stewart is fake. Stewart is then seen to say, "Wrong as usual!" as if Mallard were not often wrong, which he demonstrably is. Such fakery is unnecessary, at least for this writer, as Tinsley's authentic cartoons are more than sufficiently indicting.

In the cartoon of 7/7/05, Mallard exclaims, "Jon Stewart has cut and pasted me into a fake 'Mallard Fillmore' comic strip, put me in his book and even *dated* it 'October 1, 1998,' to make it look like this comic strip said stuff it didn't say." Dating it also makes it that much easier to determine its inauthenticity by requiring comparison with only one particular installment. As noted above, accurate quotation suffices, such that the critic's cup runneth over.

On 7/8/05, still complaining about Jon Stewart's fake cartoon, Mallard says, "The problem is that he tried to *deceive* people into thinking it was a real one!" As if it took one to know one, Mallard, as recently as 6/26/05, tried to deceive people into thinking *he* had made a real, contradictory rebuttal. Mallard continues, "Whereas when *this comic strip* puts words into people's mouths, *he signs it down there*, so you know they didn't really say stuff like: . . ." It is far from clear how "this comic strip" can serve as a pronomial for the pronoun *he*. Also, this statement may serve as a plausible disclaimer for Mallard, but not for Tinsley. If Mallard says it, it is because Tinsley "really" wrote it.

Discussing women in combat in the *Los Angeles Times*, 7/9/05, Lisalee Anne Wells writes, "Combat duty is not a fairness issue, not a right of women in the service; it is a way to win wars, and nothing that obstructs this objective should be suffered in the name of political correctness." Similarly, logic is a way to win contests of explanation, and creationism should not be granted social promotion in contravention of conservative principles.



In the cartoon of 7/12/05, Mallard notes that there are “still only two Asians playing in the NBA.” Conservatives, for their part, resent Howard Dean’s observation of their statistically demonstrable whiteness and Christianity, though they themselves often claim the U.S. to be a Christian nation. On 7/13/05, referring to the previous cartoon, Mallard awaits “the howls of indignation from civil-rights advocates.” On 7/14/05, Tinsley has a character say, “Whenever there’s social inequality, it’s because of ‘institutional discrimination.’” Tinsley thus licenses dismissal of complaints (including his own) about “discrimination” against conservatives. For example, in the cartoon of 10/26/05, Mallard becomes a target for Tinsley’s mockery when he classifies as an endangered species the “conservative college professor.” Academe discriminates against idiots, not conservatives, thought if Tinsley wishes to correlate these two groups, he is welcome to do so.

In the cartoon of 7/18/05, Mallard reports, “This just in: It’s 6:43 p.m., and Tom Cruise hasn’t done anything nutty today.” This state of affairs would be equally noteworthy of Mallard.

Conservatives regularly chastise liberals for comparing the U.S. with totalitarian regimes. Nevertheless, in the cartoon of 7/25/05, the government of the U.S. is compared to that of Vietnam by a sympathetic character.

In the cartoon of 7/28/05, Mallard reports, “According to the latest figures from the Department of Health and Human Services, allegations of researchers falsifying data were up 50 percent in 2004 over 2003, unless, of course, the guys over at the Department of Health and Human Services are just making this stuff up.” Just making stuff up is the only recourse available to religion.

In the cartoon of 7/31/05, a lawyer say, “Your honor, my client pleads ‘not guilty, by reason of being a celebrity.’” Nor should cartoonists like Tinsley be held to a lower standard of logic.

In the cartoon of 8/4/5, Mallard says, “Something tells me it’s just a matter of time ’til a whole new generation of moviegoers is given the opportunity to be enchanted by the remake of ‘Ishtar,’” as if Mallard never repeated *his* less-than-enchancing jokes.

In a cartoon by Michael Ramirez, 8/4/05, the “GOP” says to Frist, “We’ve worked out a compromise. We’re going to donate your stem cells.” This is said as if it were meant to be menacing. As Frist is an adult, he could only donate adult stem cells. The joke might have worked if the threat had been to donate retroactively Frist’s embryonic stem cells. As it stands, it is no more interesting than the idea of blood donation. In that sense, most people *should* donate their stem cells.

In the cartoon of 8/7/05, Mallard says, “Microsoft has agreed to help the Chinese government censor its people by blocking such words [as *freedom, democracy* and *human rights*] from their internet searches. Yahoo and Google are doing the same sort of things.” He then asserts that “‘integrity’ is a word that Microsoft, Yahoo and Google are apparently unacquainted with.” Mallard is right to criticize the ways that corporations sometimes react to the pressures of commerce. Tinsley himself, however, is not above employing absurdity in order to earn money. It is also hoped that Mallard may someday become acquainted with the concept of the dangling preposition. (Mallard is not alone in this. In the *Bliss* cartoon of Harry Bliss, 8/19/08, a woman looking over the shoulder of a man typing at a computer says, “It’s, ‘She’s driving me crazy and I’m not sure whom to turn to.’” One wonders what “it” is. To this writer, “it” lacks a dangling preposition. One may as well ask not *Who the Bell Tolls For.*)

In the cartoon of 8/25/05, a voice emerges from a television saying, “We here in the mainstream media felt that we should *also* report on the *positive* changes occurring in Iraq. We

quickly sat down until the feeling went away,” as if Tinsley reported much positive Democratic or negative Republican activity, or as if creationists ever reported on the baby rather than bathwater of science.

In the cartoon of 8/26/05, Mallard says, “Chet, you’ve got to stop beating trendy catch phrases to death.” He answers, “You’re right. I really *do* do that and ‘that’s just wrong’!” Mallard says, “Maybe there’s a support group or something.” Let him not forget “death tax” and “climate change.” Mallard himself will be shown to be capable of unapologetic but tedious incessancy.

The cartoons in which Mallard employs faulty grammar render that of 8/28/05 ironic, hollow pontificating. In it, Mallard complains of “apostrophe abuse” and is called “one of those grumpy old grammar cranks.” Deference may be given to Tinsley when the grammatical failures are those of characters other than Mallard, as in the cartoon of 9/25/05, when a woman thinks, “You should see how he decides who to vote for,” which features an improper object and a dangling preposition. If nothing else, Tinsley can at least talk the talk. Unfortunately, it is Mallard himself who, 11/30/05, says, “This is me being relieved that this is the last panel of this comic strip that I have to keep a straight face in.” The dangling preposition is nicely complemented by the improper nominative pronoun. In the 9 *Chickweed Lane* cartoon of 5/12/06, Thorax writes to a man seeking advice, “If you end another sentence with a preposition, I’ll kill you with my bare hands.” Let those who live by the sword of grammar crankiness, die by it. That this is acceptable to Tinsley is suggested in the cartoon of 12/2/05, in which a child says, “Ms. Carp, I *would’ve* done my social studies homework, but I might wanna be a judge someday and I’m concerned about leaving a ‘paper trail.’” Tinsley’s lack of any such concern demonstrates his acceptance of the consequences.

In the cartoon of 9/7/05, Senator Leahy says, “Judge Roberts, how about you tell me how you’d vote on an abortion case and I’ll tell you how I’ve already made up my mind to vote on your confirmation,” as if conservatives were immune to prejudice, which is an accent fallacy.

In the cartoon of 9/12/05, Mallard deals with “a bored, indifferent graduate student who’s *way* too overqualified to bring you your food on time.” Overqualification overqualified does not seem to be an excuse for Mallard, such that it is understandable that he would experience culture shock when encountering it.

In the cartoon of 9/15/05, Mallard is horrified by the idea of “forced tipping” and by a young person’s “sense of entitlement.” Nor are creationists automatically entitled to unearned respect.

In the cartoon of 9/16/05, Mallard asks, “So, under this restaurant’s ‘mandatory gratuity’ policy, the *best* servers and the *worst* servers all get *the same 20-percent tip?*” Tinsley makes this the case in his fictitious restaurant, though he does not explain what happens to the excess money when a tip of more than 20% is given.

In the cartoon of 9/20/05, Mallard reports, “According to a new survey, most Americans believe that the group that responded most quickly to the tragedy in New Orleans was the group of people saying, ‘This is all about race.’” Creationists are equally quick to say that opposition to creationism is all about religion, when it is properly about logic. Having failed to achieve adequate comfort from logic and reality, creationists go shopping for it elsewhere.

In the cartoon of 9/25/05, a man is repeatedly told by TV reports, “Cigarettes cause lung cancer, and can kill you.” It is only after he is told, “Peter Jennings smoked, and died from lung cancer” that he says, “Hey, maybe cigarettes are *dangerous!* I’d better *quit!*” Conservatives are

no less notorious for conveniently ignoring science and for their susceptibility to the cult of personality.

In the cartoon of 10/1/05, Mallard says, “Children from two-parent families are better off economically, emotionally, and socially, according to a review just released by the Brookings Institution, Princeton University, and the Foundation for Spending Lots of Time and Money to Rediscover what our Grandparents Knew Instinctively.” Mallard predictably fails to say *how much* better. Many people’s grandparents also knew instinctively that slavery is good and women should not vote. Nor does instinct help much in the recognition of the explanatory superiority of quantum mechanics. Time and money are well spent in the falsification of incorrect instincts.

In the cartoon of 10/7/05, Mallard notes how rare it is for people not to be talking on a cell phone in public. Echoing an observation from a previous essay, the discovery of a creationist with a simultaneous knowledge of biology, logic and English will be cause to through a party. As a case in point, Louis Agassiz (1807-1873) is regarded by some as the last genuinely scientific creationist (though he is also notorious for trying to be a scientific racist). Today, informed creationist criticism rarely emerges even from professionals, and even more rarely trickles down to the amateur level.

In the cartoon of 10/9/05, Mallard says that “saying ‘bling bling’ makes you sound like an idiot,” as does a great deal of what Mallard says.

In the cartoon of 10/12/05, Mallard asks if the life supposedly discovered on Mars is intelligent. A character replies, “Not *very!* Look at how they’re trashing the planet!” Tinsley is seldom above trashing logic, and creationists almost never are.

In the cartoon of 10/16/05, “the conventional wisdom” says, “I want you to boycott the book, ‘Why Men Earn More: The Startling Truth Behind the Pay Gap, and What Women Can Do About It!’” It is explained that “it shows that when women earn less than men, it’s more often about the jobs *they choose* than ‘discrimination.’” Not revealing *how much* more allows for discrimination to be a factor nearly half the time, which seems acceptable to Tinsley. The report continues, “Men are willing to work longer hours, dirtier, more dangerous jobs, etc.” White-collar jobs would not be what they are if they did not pay more than “dirty” ones. It would be surprising if ditch diggers made more than executives. Finally, “When women work *the exact same jobs as men*, for as many hours, they actually make more than men!” To the extent that women earn more, the book is mistitled. If it is not, then Tinsley is obliged to accept the (presumably statistical) premise of that title: men earn more.

In the cartoon of 10/23/05, it is reported that “kids who eat dinner with their families five or more times a week get better grades and have better language skills.” How much better? Neither the magnitude nor the significance of this difference is given, though the source of the information is cited. It is further reported of these kids that “they’re way less likely to drink, smoke, or use drugs.” The closest Tinsley can come to a quantitative assessment is “way,” though this is being spoken by a character being ridiculed. Conservatives also denounce those who seek to restrict smoking.

In the cartoon of 10/24/05, Mallard says, “It’s that time of year again, when public schools across the USA have Halloween dress-up days, but *ban* politically incorrect costumes. Of course, if most school administrators knew that Halloween began as a Christian holy day, they wouldn’t be celebrating it in the first place.” If Mallard would prefer kids dressing up as pedophile priests, then let it be. How a holiday begins obviously matters little to conservatives, as Christmas began as an expedient Christian excuse for the celebration of Saturnalia and is solemnly observed, nonetheless. Halloween “began” with the commandeering of preexisting

harvest festivals. “It long antedates Christianity,” says the 1947 *Encyclopedia Britannica*. “History,” it continues, “shows that the main celebrations of Hallowe’en were purely Druidical . . . . On the Druidic ceremonies were grafted some of the characteristics of the Roman festival in honour of Pomona held about Nov. 1.” Also, the name *Easter*, the Easter egg and the sunrise service are all inherited from Paganism. At best, then, Mallard’s intellectual laziness demonstrates the potency of the word *if* (which is explored in the cartoon of 3/12/06), for if a frog had wings, . . . . The cartoon of 2/13/06 then ironically employs the Pagan character Cupid in observance of Valentine’s Day.

A guest on Sean Hannity’s Fox television show, 10/25/05, said that everyone is guilty who commits a crime, Republican or Democrat. Hannity then attributed to him the belief that “when Clinton does it, it’s okay,” even though Hannity apparently knew that Clinton was a Democrat. This *plurium interrogationum* fallacy reflects an impairment of some sort, though perhaps only of hearing. Similarly, on his television program 4/9/07, Sean Hannity asked a guest if he would condemn Al Sharpton and Jesse Jackson for their offensive remarks. When the guest replied that he condemns anyone and everyone who makes such remarks, Hannity asked why the guest was having trouble giving a straight answer, while bragging that he (Hannity) was consistent. After getting the answer that he sought, what was it that made Hannity unable to recognize it? It is unlikely that he was so unfamiliar with English. Rather, he probably just could not override his poised responses, though it is at least possible that he posed a genuine hazard to himself.

In the cartoon of 11/03/05, Mallard says, “I can’t believe it! Bill Bennett actually admitted on video that he beats his wife!” Another character says, “Actually, in the whole clip, he said ‘I usually beat my wife at chess.’” Mallard says, “And you didn’t think that last part was important enough to put on the air?” The other character says, “We’ve only got 19 minutes! You’ve got to edit somewhere!” Such editing is typical of creationists such as Michael J. Behe.

In the cartoon of 11/13/05, Mallard bemoans the mispronunciation of the word *forte*. The cartoon of 12/5/05 may include a sentence that begins with a numeral. In the cartoon of 2/19/06, Mallard actually splits an infinitive (“to always use”) in the midst of bemoaning the use of *I* as an object, he uses *me* as a subject (“This is me . . .”) on 11/30/05. Those who live in glass houses and live by the sword of grammar, . . . . In the cartoon of 5/6/06, Mallard splits another infinitive when saying, “It must be nice to still be living in 1958,” again revealing his fussy, doctrinaire stance as a grammarian to be a mere pose. (To the extent that it is not, this writer accepts the gratitude owed to him by Mallard for all the correction.) Then, in the cartoon of 8/14/06, Mallard says, “Trust me on this one. It’s best not to correct a teacher’s grammar in class.” A teacher is then shown saying, “Wellll, class, look who thinks they’re smarter than me!” Mallard then responds, “Actually, that’s ‘look who thinks he’s smarter than I am.’” If rejecting grammatical criticism is wrong, then let Tinsley accept it, unless he wants to become the object of his own satire. And if it is *I* here, then why was it *me* in the cartoon of 11/30/05? Incidentally, in a segment on FOX TV in mid 2006 during which she advocated the learning of English by immigrants, Laura Ingraham split *two* infinitives.

In the cartoon of 11/15/05, when someone thinks Mallard is weird for considering starting “a ‘save Veronica Mars’ petition,” he says, “If she were a snail darter you’d applaud my ‘social science.’” If she were a snail darter, then social science would not be applicable, as it deals with humans.

In a commentary in the *Los Angeles Times*, 11/16/05, Brian C. Anderson admires *The Incredibles* for its “defense of excellence (and frustration with the politically correct war against

it).” If conservatives oppose politically correct euphemism, then, even according to them, the bluff of creationists should be called, their theory’s explanatory inferiority should be explicitly, arithmetically demonstrated, and the excellence of science should be celebrated.

In the cartoon of 11/20/05, Mallard condemns “cream-of-mushroom soup” in the name of “the foundation for people with taste buds.” These essays are written on behalf of those with logic. Taste can be defined as a pleasurable reaction to good and aversion to bad. Let it be so.

In the cartoon of 11/21/05, Mallard says, “According to the mainstream media, ‘lying under oath,’ so trendy and acceptable in the 90s, is wrong again.” Please alert this writer when illogic, currently so trendy and acceptable, is again recognized as wrong, which it always is.

In the cartoon of 11/22/05, Mallard says, “Allegations and recriminations continue to swirl around the controversial videotape that shows President Bush acting conservative.” Conservatives consider it controversial when scientists act logically.

In the cartoon of 11/23/05, Mallard makes fun of Ted Kennedy for saying, “It’s obvious that Bush nominated Alito to respond to the people who elected him!” Mallard thus commits the *argumentum ad populum*. Leadership, as Bush himself has said, involves doing right, even when it is *unpopular*.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 11/25/05, David Gelernter writes, “The age that rated . . . intellectual exploration higher than career preparation had it exactly right.” May creationists expand their exploration.

In the cartoon of 11/27/05, Mallard says, “Criminals don’t care about gun laws! They just penalize law-abiding people.” The use of the word *just* means that criminals who violate such laws and are actually apprehended are, nevertheless, not penalized. This is very surprising. Properly administered, laws penalize no one who abides by them but only those who violate them. People who abide by gun law but are nevertheless victimized by criminals could be said to be penalized by gun laws, except that conservatives do not accept that the government is guilty of allowing terrorists to attack Americans, placing the blame on the terrorists instead. Conservatives thus oblige themselves to blame the criminals and not the gun laws. Mallard goes on to claim that “even the Centers for Disease Control’s research has found that gun laws haven’t brought violent-crime stats down!” As discussed elsewhere in these essays, let it not be imagined that film laws would bring down violent-crime stats any more effectively.

In the cartoon of 11/28/05, Mallard declares, “I’m taking a three-day weekend, to celebrate William F. Buckley’s birthday!” When it is protested, “But you said last Thursday was ‘Buckley Day’!” Mallard says, “It was. But the following Monday is ‘Buckley Day observed.’” For creationists, every day is April Fool’s Day observed.

In the cartoon of 12/5/05, Mallard reports, “This just in: 73-year-old Edith Appold of Niceville, Florida, has been revealed in formerly classified documents as the only living American who didn’t know that Valerie Plame worked for the C.I.A.” One looks similarly silly when commenting on science while revealing oneself to be ill-informed.

In the cartoon of 12/6/05, Mallard reports, “This just in. New evidence that helps explain this season’s appearance of Che Guevara on pop-culture merchandise: Kim Jong Il’s not very photogenic.” Darwin is an easy target, especially for those not smart enough to rebut his successors.

In the cartoon of 12/7/05, Mallard asks a character, “Sir, why did you decide to wear a Che Guevara t-shirt?” The man replies, “I told the guy in the store that I wanted something Marxist, and as it turns out, they didn’t have the Groucho or Harpo shirts in my size.” Darwin is often denounced with equal imprecision.

In the cartoon of 12/15/05, Mallard commits an *argumentum ad populum* by noting that Fox News is growing in popularity relative to network news shows. Even in politics, the majority merely rules, but is not necessarily right. Right is prior to popularity.

In the cartoon of 12/16/05, Mallard expresses anti-intellectualism by referring to “geeks” with computers.

In the cartoon of 12/31/05, Mallard says, “Now I’d better go get some bad habits so I can make resolutions against ’em.” In the categories of logic and grammar, he already has the bad habit of not recognizing his existing ones.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 1/1/06, Dennis Prager writes, “To the extent that schools deal with right and wrong, it is in the arena of social values, not personal behavior.” Let it also be dealt with in the arena of logic and science. Prager bemoans the lack of “personal integrity” and “moral obligation.” Let these also apply in the realm of logic.

In the cartoon of 1/5/06, character says, “I thought I was so liberal and tolerant, but those cowboys kissing in ‘Brokeback Mountain’ completely grossed me out!” as if these were inconsistent. No aesthetic reaction could amount to the sort of criminal behavior that would demonstrate genuine practical intolerance. Similarly, creationists are allowed to live and to be employed, however much they may disappoint.

The cartoon of 1/11/06 suggests that merely “placating folks” is wrong. Neither should appeasement be extended to creationists.

The *Los Angeles Times*, 1/11/06, reports on a Lebec, California lawsuit: “Casey Luskin, the legal affairs director of the Discovery Institute, an organization that supports intelligent design said he had not read the lawsuit but that if Americans United is trying to keep students from hearing about alternatives to evolutionary theory that would be ‘censorship.’” Comprehensive education requires exposure to all alternatives, but it would be equally censorious to keep students from hearing evaluations of those alternatives. Students should learn what is wrong with evolutionary theory and what is *worse* with creationism. “I’m not a biologist,” countered Bob Anderson, in a letter printed the next day, “but the last time I looked, evolution was and is still an unproven theory.” The word *but* is particularly appropriate, yet causes Anderson no inhibition. All theories are necessarily unproven. Creationism is more than unproven; it is inferior. That same day the following is also reported: “Pastor Scott Irwin of . . . Lebec Community Church . . . said he hoped the fight would motivate people to question evolution.” Questions are welcome, as evolution has answers, and superior ones at that.

The cartoon of 1/12/06 reads, “The education establishment’s new year’s resolutions: Instead of ‘math,’ ‘English’ and ‘science’ and stupid old, dry ‘history,’ we resolve to keep teaching diversity, tolerance and everything else that’s P.C.” Mallard himself could benefit from more English education. It is for creationists to learn tolerance of math and science. Mallard’s implied disapproval of inferior science education licenses disapproval of creationism, which already derives from the impartial application of conservative opposition to social promotion, affirmative action and multiculturalism.

In the cartoon of 1/18/06, political correctness is mocked when Presidents Day is used as an opportunity to avoid “favoring any particular president.” It is similarly absurd to think that theories are not evaluated and ranked, rather than given “equal time.”

In the cartoon of 1/28/06, Mallard claims to be “not old enough to remember when the schools were good.” It often shows.

In the cartoon of 1/29/06, Mallard is puzzled by certain sports being televised, saying he understands participation, “But who’d wanna watch other folks doing ’em?” Quantitatively, there

are clearly enough to justify such programming. Who, by the way, would want to participate in the commission of Mallard's errors?

In the cartoons of 2/5/06 and 2/7//06, New Orleans Mayor Nagin is ridiculed for saying, "It's the way God wants it to be!" Then, in the cartoon of 2/24/06, Mallard reads the following correspondence: "Dear Mallard, *The Washington Post* implies that you're being *paid* to mention the T.V. show 'Veronica Mars' in this comic strip. Is this true? Sincerely, Concerned." Without denying the implication, Mallard replies, "Dear Concerned, This is a perfect example of what happens when people believe things they read in *The Washington Post*." Myriad examples exist of what happens when people believe things they read in the Bible.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 2/9/06, Jonah Goldberg writes that Jerry Springer "made his fortune proving that nothing is too vile to broadcast." Creationists behave similarly with respect to logic.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 2/16/06, Jonah Goldberg describes conservatism as "fiscal restraint, limited government and cultural decency." It far too seldom includes logical decency.

In the cartoon of 2/21/06, Mallard states "that women now outnumber men in college," and, in the cartoon of 2/22/06, alludes to "new data that show that women in college now outnumber men, 57 percent to 43 percent." Mallard very conveniently makes no mention of their majors nor of their graduation rates.

In the cartoon of 2/22 [presumably of 2006], Mallard says to a character, "So your daughter's dating a conservative and you're having trouble handling it?" The character responds, "Why'd she have to break up with that nice trans-gendered, body pierced anarchist she dated all through high school? I guess I'm just old-fashioned." The political reference may be relevant, but Mallard disappoints if he implies that character judgments should be based on sexual orientation or on sartorial and tonsorial superficialities, especially since he himself, a talking duck, may be considered trans-specied.

In the cartoon of 3/6/06, the media are satirized for "beating the Dick Cheney hunting-accident story to death." In the cartoon of 8/28/06, Mallard reports, "Three weeks later, there've still been no arrests made in the savage beating-to-death of the Mel Gibson story, though the mainstream media remain prime suspects." Tinsley himself finds it hard to abandon certain stories, exploiting each repetitiously. Veronica Mars is a frequent topic (11/14/05, 11/15/05, 11/16/05, 11/18/05, 11/19/05, 1/27/06, 2/23/06, 2/25/06, 8/27/06), and Senator Tom Coburn is the subject of five consecutive cartoons (3/20/06, 3/21/06, 3/22/06, 3/23/06, 3/24/06). A casual survey of his work will reveal numerous other examples. If Tinsley actually disapproved of the *argumentum ad nauseum*, then he himself would abstain from using it. Such is not the case.

In the cartoon of 3/13/06, "the fashion sense of an olympic ice dancer" is derided, as may be the logic of a duck like Mallard.

In the cartoon of 3/19/06, Mallard bemoans "the education crisis." He himself may not exemplify a crisis, but his frequent demonstration of room for improvement provides ample grounds for citing him here as an excellent object for observationist humor.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 3/24/06, Nora Gallagher writes of "secular fundamentalism" as a "prejudice" involving "the strict maintenance of doctrine, without actual experience of 'the other,' a bubble that actively screens out different points of view." Conservatives demand that liberals denounce wrong. As illogic is wrong, let it be denounced, at least by someone, if not conservatives. Prejudice is not involved here. This is not an *argumentum ad hominem* but its opposite. Beliefs are not to be judged by who believes them, but on their own merit. If anything, it is the believer who should be judged by his beliefs. Gallagher writes of secularists who

“compare the worst of Christianity with the best of reason.” Doing the opposite is typical of religionists when they confuse the baby with the bathwater. Even the best of bathwater is still bathwater and not baby. Futile, illogical, irrational, impossible points of view screen themselves out, such that no fault can accrue to secularists for not extending social promotion to them.

In the cartoon of 3/25/06, Mallard’s editor is “on the horns of a liberal dilemma,” as he asks, “Do we think Martha’s a rich person who got off easy or a woman targeted for her gender?” Conservatives display untroubled self-contradiction at least as often as they seem to experience dilemma.

In the cartoon of 3/27/06, Mallard receives an e-mail that reads in part, “You may know something about the issues, but you obviously have no idea how politics work!” Mallard responds, “That may be the nicest thing anyone’s ever said to me.” Perhaps he is equally pleased with his ignorance in other areas.

In the cartoon of 3/29/06, titled “The Oscars, The Early Years,” a caveman says, “I’m really proud to be ‘out of touch’ with all of those knuckle-dragging, mainstream alarmists out there.” Simply being in touch means nothing, as the *argumentum ad populum* is fallacious. Pride is earned not by isolation but by superiority.

In the cartoon of 4/17/06, titled “Mallard Presents: Amazing but True!” Mallard reports, “American taxpayers will lend the government \$10 billion, *interest free*, an average of \$2,423 per lender. These lending idiots are easy to spot.” A man is then shown saying, “I’m getting a refund!!” Creationists similarly jettison the baby and then rejoice when any value is found in the bathwater. Also, the use of the term “idiots” precludes Tinsley from complaining justly about its application to those whose stupidity matches the example that he gives.

In the cartoon of 4/24/06, a story is related about people getting “mugged while not being allowed to have a handgun.” Two days later, 4/26/06, Mallard offers a bumper sticker that reads, “My son donates his lunch money to the older, larger students’ fund at Polk Middle School.” Perhaps Mallard thinks that middle school children should be allowed to carry handguns.

In the cartoon of 4/25/06, Mallard says, “I was just imagining what would’ve happened to a *white* congresswoman who hit a *black* Capitol Hill policeman.” Let him also imagine what happens when creationism is forced to endure the least bit of logical rigor or if a scientist tried to get away with creationist-style logical misbehavior.

In the cartoon of 4/30/06, Mallard says, “It’s getting harder and harder to tell the people with those wireless cellphone earpieces from the ones who are just nuts.” The ones who are merely ignorant are similarly hard to distinguish from the insane.

In the cartoon of 5/1/06, Mallard reports, “French president Jacques Chirac has caved in to protesters and canceled a new youth-employment law. Woow. A french leader? *Surrendering?* Who saw *that* coming?!” A conservative idiot? Imagine this writer’s surprise!

In the cartoon of 5/15/06, a journalist says, “When former Clinton staffers leak C.I.A. secrets, they’re ‘courageous whistleblowers’! When Bush staffers do it, they’re despicable ‘leakers.’” This implies that it should be one or the other. But as to which is the proper characterization, Tinsley does not specify. Nor does he allow for the possibility of only one of the sets of actions serving the public interest.

The cartoon of 5/16/06 features a “journalist t-shirt” that reads, “My contact at the CIA betrayed her country, and all I got was this Pulitzer Prize.” Murderers commits equally heinous acts and reporting on them could be equally skillful, though probably not by way of a cartoon. This implies that the ambiguity of the previous day’s cartoon is to be resolved in favor of the impossibility of “courageous whistleblowers.”



In the cartoon of 5/17/06, in a section marked “Then,” a character says, “No drilling in Alaska! No new refineries! No nuclear power!” In a section marked “Now,” the character says, “Why are gas prices so high?!!” The same lack of Alaskan drilling, refineries and nuclear power existed in years of substantially lower gas prices. Also, the link between nuclear power and gas prices is not obvious, as nuclear-powered oil wells are unknown to this writer. The same reversal of attitude is portrayed in the cartoon of 5/18/06, though attributed only to a nameless straw man, presumably John Q. Public.

In the cartoon of 5/26/06, a youth explains the keeping of his “decision to major in the hard sciences a secret” by saying, “I didn’t wanna be accused of ‘acting Asian.’” Creationists act as if they fear being accused of acting civilized. The next day, Mallard asks the youth, “[W]hy don’t more American kids major in math and science?” He is then told that “they don’t call ’em the ‘hard sciences’ for nothing.” Creationists demonstrate the easy way out. In the cartoon of 7/5/06, Mallard reports, “Liberal spokespersons today accused Ann Coulter of hogging the New York Times best-seller list for the past several years and are calling for federal legislation requiring that liberal books be more popular.” He is saying this after seeming to plead for “hard sciences” to be more popular among American kids, in addition to there being no accounting for taste.

In the cartoon of 5/29/06, a character says that Memorial Day is “the one day the media give our service men and women the respect they deserve *every* day.” This implies that “the media” actively give disrespect, since Tinsley’s cartoons often do not address this topic and so cannot be considered to be giving respect. Otherwise, according to Tinsley, when both he and “the media” say nothing about the military, only the latter would be to blame. Neither are those who deserve disrespect every day to be forgotten.

In the cartoon of 5/30/06, Mallard reports, “The human rights group “Save the Children” reports that United Nations peacekeepers continue to trade food for sex from girls as young as *eight!* Predictably, the U.N. has reacted quickly to form discussion groups to talk this problem over.” Failing to state the story quantitatively, Tinsley allows for the possibility that the problem is no more frequent among these peacekeepers than among the Catholic clergy, where it is seldom dealt with any more quickly or effectively. Conservatives consider the quantitative aspect irrelevant, as exhibited by their pointing to the *infrequency* of American water boarding.

In the cartoon of 5/31/06, Mallard derides the following idea: “The U.N.’s sex-for-food scandals in Africa, Bosnia and Cambodia have been overblown, and involve a few ‘bad apples.’” The Vatican has been known to engage in similar apologetics. Continuing this U.N. story the next day (6/1/06), Mallard declares, “The joke is that a lot of Americans *still* think that footing the bill for that gang of corrupt, America-hating thugs in midtown Manhattan is a good idea.” Similarly, the child-molesting Catholic clergy remains tax-exempt, and people call for creationism, which is a corruption of logic, to be taught in publicly funded schools. Also, whether or not a good idea, America does not foot the *entire* bill. The cartoon of 6/6/06 restates the issue: “The human-rights group ‘Save the Children’ found abuse by U.N. ‘peacekeepers’ from Africa to Bosnia to Cambodia of girls as young as eight.” Again, by not being quantitative, Tinsley allows that the Catholic clergy may be even worse.

In the cartoon of 6/2/06, Mallard says, half in jest, “95% of people who accuse conservative duck reporters of making up data are hamster-brained ideologues.” This *argumentum ad hominem* would do nothing to excuse a conservative if his data *were* made up. (In the *Los Angeles Times*, 5/31/06, Jon Wiener reports on John R. Lott Jr. denouncing authors who report that scholars are unable to confirm his contention that crime decreases in states where

people are allowed to carry concealed weapons.) Also, Mallard's politically unilateral assertion is an accent fallacy because stupidity is also to be readily found among conservatives.

In the cartoon of 6/3/06, Mallard says, "Congratulations, 'Dartmouth Review,' on a quarter century of sticking it to 'The Man'! Speaking from experience, it's a great feeling." Equally great is sticking it to "The Duck" whenever it is deserved. This is also another example of Mallard demonstrating by his punctuation that he often forgets that he is not in England anymore, which is especially ironic for one posing as a particular defender of the American way, including, one would think, the American way of punctuation.

In the cartoon of 6/4/06, after identifying several constellations (among which he includes the Big and Little Dippers, which are asterisms and not constellations), Mallard says, "This message has been a public service of the Foundation for Awareness that the folks who saw those *other* constellations were doing some serious drugs." The same is true of what creationists read into nature.

In the cartoon of 6/7/06, Mallard condemns the practice of "killing the messenger," thus immunizing this writer from the disapproval of even those conservatives sufficiently stupid to adopt the *argumentum ad hominem*. When scientific results are reported, neither the reporter nor arithmetic should be blamed.

In the cartoon of 6/8/06, Mallard reports, "Liberals continue to be in denial regarding the United Nations' 'sex for food' scandal, stating that the U.N. is a bastion of 'very nice niceness,' which can do no wrong, and that, obviously, no problem ever existed, or Bono would've mentioned it." If Mallard is not "in denial" regarding the Catholic clergy sex scandal, then let him "mention it."

In the cartoon of 6/13/06, a woman says to a child, "I'll return to yelling at you for biting your sister, right after these messages from Froot Loops and the Nintendo Game Boy." She then says to the reader, "You've got to communicate with them in language that they understand." Some of us would rather foster the elevation of others to our level rather than lower ourselves to theirs. In so doing, let conservatives be reminded of their own opposition to social promotion, affirmative action and multiculturalism. Also, an example of Ann Coulter soliciting unsophisticated speech for the benefit of conservatives will be cited below.

In the cartoon of 6/14/06, Mallard reports, "This just in: New data show that toddlers who watch more than two hours of TV per day develop powerful media muscles that will enable them to watch T.V. all day as adults." This is actually a terribly modest sort of enablement. Any adult unable to watch TV all day is quite a pathetic specimen. Also, enablement is not compulsion.

In the cartoon of 6/16/06, Mallard asks a woman, "How could your son not know what a book is?" She replies, "What's a book?" Mallard sometimes acts as if he did not know what dangling prepositions and split infinitives were. Creationists unfamiliar with cladograms are legion. The childhood innocence that Mallard so values (as in the cartoon of 5/7/06) all too often gives rise to a very disappointing adult innocence.

In the cartoon of 6/17/06, Mallard offers "alternative-book-use suggestions for kids raised on T.V." There may be a statistical truth underlying his suggestions, but there is no shortage of books that are every bit as useless as anything found on television.

In the cartoon of 6/24/06, as a character says, "We're either gonna have global warming, or freezing! And it's all humans' fault!!" Mallard says, "A new Fillmore-Foundation study has concluded that global media-climate hysteria is caused by thoughtless humans, and is not a natural phenomenon." It is stipulated that climate change is not *all* humans' fault. Hysteria is indeed caused by thoughtlessness, but there is also the matter of sober recognition of facts.

Creationists sometimes conveniently deny the existence of *any* natural phenomena, though supernatural ones are oxymoronic.

In the cartoon of 6/25/06, Tinsley expresses the unfairness of illegal immigrants exploiting unearned benefits. Neither should unearned benefits be enjoyed by creationism. Instead, let all theories enjoy benefits *ad valorem*.

In the cartoon of 6/26/06, as a televised voice repeats “Haditha!” a man tells a child, “One of the great things about our nation is that you’re innocent until proven guilty, except, of course, if you’re in the U.S. armed forces.” The great thing is the legal recognition in this country of the logical principle of the presumption of innocence. The example given is merely one of public opinion and carries no legal consequences. Misplacement of the burden of proof is also a hallmark of creationism. Also, people have been held without trial *by* the U.S. armed forces.

In the cartoon of 6/27/06, Mallard warns, “The next few episodes of this comic strip may contain graphic re-creations of the Liberal Logic that appears in many of my readers’ e-mails . . . any resemblance to actual logic is purely coincidental, and may not be suitable for children or adults.” Other times, it is Conservative Logic that is on display, with equally accidental “resemblance to actual logic,” and no greater suitability, at least for adults, which also characterizes creationism. Conservatives speak of the “failed socialist ideas” of liberals. Let not the failure of creationism go unrecognized.

In the cartoon of 6/28/06, Mallard says to a critic, “I try to bring you news that you haven’t already heard a thousand times.” Students too stupid to show their work are not entitled to any such excuse. Tinsley is certainly not excused for omitting relevant information when it is not commonly known and its absence permits an accent fallacy. Fortunately, opportunistic cherry picking can fool only some of the people some of the time. Also, Mallard has himself repeatedly employed the *argumentum ad nauseum*.

In the cartoon of 7/1/06, Mallard hears a newscast on which it is reported, “We regret to report tonight that in our zeal to bring you objective news, we made a mistake. Abu Musab Al-Zarqawi was actually Al-Qaida’s leader in Iraq and not an innocent four-year-old Iraqi girl, as we previously reported.” Would that creationists had such regrets about the caricatures of science that they purvey.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 7/2/06, Thomas A. Szyszkiewicz writes that “abstinence before marriage is the best prevention against the [human papilloma] virus.” He asserts that “the logic is simple, scientific and elementary. It goes like this: Human papilloma virus is a sexually transmitted disease. One does not get a sexually transmitted disease if one doesn’t have sex. Therefore, the way to avoid this virus is by not having sex until marriage – and hope one’s spouse has followed the same logic.” He concludes that this “can be followed by anyone. To say otherwise is demonstrably false.” Szyszkiewicz claims that premarital abstinence is “the best prevention,” but then admits the need to “hope.” Such temporary abstinence cannot be “the best prevention” since perpetual abstinence is even better. The safety to which he refers is due to lack of disease and monogamy, not to marriage. “One does not get a sexually transmitted disease if one doesn’t have sex,” nor does one if having sex with a safe partner, which is exactly the marital scenario that he proposes. If one’s spouse is safe, then that safety antecedes the marriage, making one’s partner no greater threat before marriage than after. And if an arbitrarily large pool of potential mates has “followed the same logic,” then no amount of promiscuity within that pool can spread what does not exist there. His final claim that sex is absolutely avoidable is a denial of the existence of rape, though he would seem to bear the burden of proving that reports of such a phenomenon are “demonstrably false.” The tables are turned in the

cartoon of 7/23/06, titled “Liberals. The Early Years,” in which a caveman being attacked says, “Quick! Gimme my spear!” A cavewoman replies, “I sold it, in preparation for that glorious day when there are enough roots and berries for everyone, and you have to hold a bake sale to buy a spear.” Let conservatives know that the glorious day when neither rape nor the human papilloma virus exists has yet to arrive.

In the cartoon of 7/3/06, Mallard reports, “The United Nations is currently holding a conference aimed at regulation of small-arms sales, perhaps based on the belief that if starving people around the world were armed, they might be able to keep U.N. ‘peacekeepers’ from molesting their children.” Unfortunately, Mallard is unable to use the second amendment in his argument, as conservatives hold that the U.S. Constitution does not extend to foreigners. If the U.N. had any such concern, then it would be foolish to restrict this effort to one category of armament. Also, Mallard gives no hint as to the stringency of the regulations in question.

In the cartoon of 7/4/06, Mallard reports, “Toyota is reportedly working on development of a car that runs on cow dung, while Honda is rumored to be developing a similar vehicle that runs on Al Gore emissions.” Gore is then shown saying, “Global warming’s man-made!!!” This level of rhetorical sophistication may be adequate for Tinsley’s purposes, but it is no better than creationist emissions. As will be discussed in a subsequent essay, global warming’s need not be man-made in order to be man-solved.

In Jim Unger’s *Herman* cartoon of 7/7/06, one golfer says to another, “Any twit can win a hole with 22 lucky shots.” Any creationist can explain the biosphere with billions of ad hoc hypotheses. Conversely, one isolated eagle is “evidence for” someone being a good golfer, but overall net score is all that counts. (A headline in the *Los Angeles Times*, 4/8/07, reads, “Appleby leads despite a triple bogey.”)

In the cartoon of 7/9/06, the story of the encroaching caveman continues. The native says, “But, people from other tribes wait for years to join ours! However, because you sneaked in, and are already here we should just automatically make you a member?” The foreigner says, “Exactly!” and adds, “I want to move here while keeping my old language, culture, and primary allegiance to my old tribe!” Similarly, creationists, with their old culture and extralogical allegiances, deserve no automatic acceptance just because they are already anywhere.

In the cartoon of 7/13/06, Mallard says, “Please press 1. if you would like to read today’s comic strip in English. Or, don’t press 1., and it’ll *still* be in English! Isn’t it great that a few things in life stay the same?” Among these is logic.

In the cartoon of 7/15/06, Mallard observes that Swedes are considered bigots for speaking Swedish in Sweden. Neither are scientist bigots for applying logic, which disqualifies creationism. Similarly, in the cartoon of 7/16/06, Mallard ridicules the postulating of “discrimination” to account for skewed racial representation in professional sports. Neither is there any unfairness in the absence of creationism in science and science education. Let it earn its way in or hit the bricks.

In the cartoon of 7/19/06, Mallard hears on his telephone, “If you’d like technical assistance in English, press three. If you’d like technical assistance from someone who speaks English with an accent that you can understand, and who doesn’t get annoyed that you can’t understand him, you should have thought of that before purchasing your computer from us.” The issue of annoyance on the part of someone “that you can’t understand” cannot arise as long as “you can understand” him, which is said of the person in question. Tinsley seems to want to describe someone whom you *cannot* understand, “and who doesn’t get annoyed” about that fact. But Tinsley denies such a fact, specifying instead that “you can understand.” Perhaps Tinsley

means that the person's accent is *recognized* as to its nationality but that a semantic, lexical unintelligibility persists. This, however, is not what is said. The accent is said to be one "that you can *understand*." One gets that for which one pays when one cannot afford proofreaders.

In the cartoon of 7/20/06, Mallard hears over the telephone, "If you would like to hear this message in Pig Latin, easeplay esspray ixsay." Mallard's approval of authentic Latin will be displayed in the cartoon of 6/1/07. If he does not appreciate Pig Latin, then let him also reject Hickspeak, which he seems to do by way of the misspelled bumper sticker in the cartoon of 4/19/06.

In Dan Piraro's *Bizarro* cartoon of 7/20/06, a reporter declares, "Scientists announced today irrefutable proof that sexual orientation is genetic. The Boy Scouts announced today the exclusion of kids with good grades in science." Logic cannot necessarily sway irrational people. Even the irrefutable remains ignorable.

In the cartoon of 7/21/06, Mallard hears over the telephone, "We hope you have found our customer technical-support service useful to you. If not, call back to speak to a technician who will contradict everything the technician with whom you just spoke said." Mallard himself (along with many conservatives) is quite adept at self-contradiction.

In the cartoon of 7/22/06, Mallard hears over the telephone, "Welcome to the New York Times automated call center. If you'd like this message in English, then you're probably an intolerant, jingoistic, knuckle-dragging bigot who also wants to pollute the environment and beat up puppies." Conservatives readily defend the killing, skinning and eating of any number of mammal species. Many conservatives also harbor stereotypes regarding liberals.

In the cartoon of 7/24/06, it is stated, "Two weeks later, North Korean leader Kim Jong Il continues to proclaim his country's abysmal nuclear-missile launch a spectacular success. Of course, he also continues to proclaim himself six feet three, sane, and utterly irresistible to women." Creationists have a similarly unrealistic image of themselves and their "abysmal" theorizing.

In the cartoon of 7/26/06, Mallard reports, "North Korean leader Kim Jong Il again today insisted that his nation has the capacity to launch nuclear missiles that could reach San Francisco, if they're launched from Oakland." Creationism requires equally extravagant ad hoc assistance.

In the cartoon of 7/27/06, Mallard reports, "World fears that North Korea had done *more* nuclear-missile tests today were allayed after revelations that the nation was merely launching the scientists who worked on its *previous* missile launch." In the absence of social promotion, creationists deserve adverse consequences because of *their* failures.

In the cartoon of 7/31/06, Mallard reports, "In the wake of the sixth straight hot-dog-eating contest win by Japan's Kobayashi, . . . , federal legislation has been proposed requiring Kobayashi to give African-American, Hispanic, and Native-American contestants a five-weenie head start." If such considerations would be absurd if offered to ethnic minorities, then neither should they be afforded to creationists. Leave the playing field level and let them lose fair and square.

In the cartoon of 8/5/06, Mallard's back-to-school tip reads, "Don't assume that your teachers want to be called 'teachers.' Many want to be called 'professional educators'! which automatically makes the teachers better, just like how grade inflation makes kids smarter. ["] Nor is creationism any better by any other name.

In the cartoon of 8/8/06, Mallard list his "teachers who really knew their subjects, were strict but fair, deserved ten times their pay, and who passed on a passion for learning to" him. This writer is strict in that he criticizes Mallard when the latter fails, and only when this writer

really knows the subject, at least compared to Mallard, which is fair. It is very much hoped that Mallard retains this “passion for learning,” as he often demonstrates that his learning in the areas of logic and English is far from complete. This writer therefore encourages and invites such learning. If all this means that Mallard considers this writer to deserve ten times his pay, then this writer is flattered.

In the cartoon of 8/15/06, Mallard reports, “‘Blender’ magazine has named singer James Taylor ‘the biggest “wuss” ever’ for his seminal role in the history of confessional, whiney, self-indulgent, listen-to-my-troubles music. Taylor apparently won because it was against the rules to give the award to his entire generation.” Tinsley writes this as if he does not recognize the applicability of this description to his own cartoon, making for quite an accent fallacy. He also does not disclaim himself from being a member of said generation, as the perpetuation of his whiney, listen-to-my-troubles-with-liberals rhetoric is confidently anticipated.

In the cartoon of 8/17/06, Tinsley again whines about whiners and those who feel sorry for themselves. Let not the whining of creationists be given any greater consideration.

In the cartoon of 8/18/06, a character says, “If my generation *believed* in hell, you’d be going there for that.” Disbelief in hell correlates far better with education level than with age. The subjunctive is used improperly here because the existence of hell is independent of belief in it. One either goes there or not. It is better to say, “If my generation *believed* in hell, we’d believe you’d be going there for that.”

In the cartoon of 8/22/06, Mallard reports, “Now for some scary news: Forty-five percent of students in the California State University system must take remedial English classes! Know what’s scarier? California has 55 electoral votes.” An accent fallacy occurs when no comparison is made to other states, such that the possibility that California has the lowest percentage of such students is not precluded. Even scarier for Mallard would be a less democratic system in which his own (occasionally) inferior English would oblige him to eat this writer’s dust. (As demonstrated by the war on the behalf of Christmas, “winner take all” is a conservative principle.) Mallard could argue that the University in question has unreasonably high standards, such as those opposed by Christian high schools with inferior curricula (Calvary Chapel Christian School of Murrieta, California being one). The next day (8/23/06), however, Mallard reports, “Due to grade inflation and the lowering of academic standards, a medium-sized turnip was admitted today as a freshman at U.C. Berkeley, and lauded by students and faculty for ‘striking a blow for diversity.’” Tinsley may be fortunate that entrance standards for cartoon college are similarly lax, for it is only slightly less absurd to tolerate, even for the sake of diversity, a preposition-dangling, infinitive-splitting duck. Mallard follows up on the story in the cartoon of 10/2/06, in which he reports, “Lowering standards has resulted in a turnip being admitted to U.C. Berkely.” He then asks a student, “So, what’s it like being in class with a turnip?” The student replies, “I think it’s a good first step, but we still have a long way to go. I hear Harvard has just admitted a member of the asparagus community.” And yet, their are conservatives who insist on admitting member of the creationist community who are no more capable than asparagus of distinguishing science from a hole in the ground. Also, Mallard never claims that the admission of a turnip displaced any humans. If not, the turnip’s money is as good as a human’s and the university may as well take it.

In the cartoon of 8/25/06, Mallard offers another back-to-school tip: “Don’t suggest that an ‘intelligent designer’ may have created evolution, unless you want school officials to go all Neanderthal on you.” Do not fail to recognize inferior explanation as such unless you want to deserve to be treated accordingly. A great many things *may* be the case, but losers walk. The very

next day, 8/26/06, the back-to-school tip is: “Don’t suggest that good teachers should make more money than bad ones. This could undermine the very principles of mediocrity that the teachers’ unions have sworn to uphold.” This writer is flattered that Mallard himself implies that the former, in light of his superiority in the areas of logic and grammar, deserves a higher salary than his. The “intelligent designer” mentioned the previous day represents, at best, the principles of mediocrity that creationists have sworn to uphold. If Mallard wants something better than mediocrity, then him not scold teachers who criticize it. In other words, if Mallard believes that good teachers deserve better than bad ones, then let him recognize which is which. Good teachers do the math and show their work so as not to keep secret the inferiority of creationism.

In the cartoon of 9/1/06, the notion that “the mainstream media” would deny “beating the Mel Gibson story to death” is ridiculed, though Mallard himself is not above using the *argumentum ad nauseum*.

In the cartoon of 9/4/06, a voice on television says, “Good evening, I’m Katie Couric. Welcome to the really, really serious, hard-news, not perky, CBS evening news.” Mallard wisely does not pretend to be any more serious than Katie Couric.

In the cartoon of 9/7/06, Mallard reports, “The International Astronomical Union has decided that Pluto is now officially not a planet anymore, but merely a small ball of ice and rock called a ‘pluton.’ In a related story, Mickey Mouse has reportedly changed his dog’s name to ‘Jupiter.’” A dog by any other name remains a dog, which is also true of creationism when its name is changed to “intelligent design,” thus putting lipstick on a pig.

In the cartoon of 9/8/06, Mallard says, “Just a reminder: Although Pluto has lost its status as a planet, and is now a ‘second-class planet,’ it can still be seen with a powerful telescope or, via satellite next Tuesday on the ‘Dr. Phil’ Show,” who is then seen saying, “Cold, isolated, ‘second-class,’ disrespected. How’s that working for you, Pluto?” Then, in the cartoon of 9/9/06, Mallard reports, “Reaction has been predictable following the I.A.U.’s demotion of Pluto to the status of a ‘second-class planet.’ Hollywood celebrities have begun lobbying Congress for more funding for second-class planets.” It is equally absurd to seek respect or funding for no-class explanations such as creationism.

The cartoon of 9/10/06 reads in part, “may we be ever vigilant.” Let this be true with respect to logic and grammar. Lest the letter be thought of as frivolous, one need only consult cartoons such as those of 11/13/05 and 2/19/06 to see that such is Tinsley’s own opinion.

In the cartoon of 9/12/06, Mallard says, “Did you know that, including pay and benefits, federal employees average *twice* the income of private-sector employees? Oh, excuse me. I was just waiting for the media to include *that* on one of their tirades about ‘income inequality.’” As federal employees are seldom called upon to flip burger, wash dishes or pick strawberries, grounds for surprise are lacking. Perhaps Mallard is offering a veiled indictment of WalMart, the biggest of all private-sector employers, which he perhaps thinks should be federalized. Let the media (and academia) also report on intellect inequality and the superiority of science.

In the cartoon of 9/13/06, Mallard says, “Maybe federal employees average *twice* the pay and benefits of private-sector employees because they work *twice as hard!*” Neither are the nine-figure incomes of corporate executives to be correlated with exertion, especially compared to agricultural workers earning minimum wage. Perhaps this means that Mallard wants the minimum wage raised. The topic is then repeated the following day, though far be it from Mallard to “beat a story to death.”

In the cartoon of 9/15/06, titled “At the Old Coaches’ Home,” various old coaches say, “And there’s no ‘k’ is ‘team’! And no ‘z’ in ‘team.’ And no ‘q.’ There’s no ‘b’ in ‘turtle.’” Creationism offers no more wisdom than the preceding observations.

The cartoon of 9/18/06 reads, “Reports now show that the United Nations’ threat of sanctions against Iran appears to be working. Apparently, the Iranian government is laughing so hard that it can’t concentrate on its nuclear program.” Creationists never seem to be able to pose a threat against science that is any less risible. In the cartoon of 9/20/06, introduced with the phrase “Why U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan is no help around the house:” Annan, holding a plunger, says, “I’m warning you for the 348th time, toilet! Either start flushing, or I’m gonna have to *use* this.” The supposed threat of creationism is similarly insubstantial.

In the cartoon of 9/25/06, Tinsley projects his own inconsistency by having a character say, “Bush started this war to get cheap gas!” Mallard observes, “But gas prices went *up* after the war began,” as if Bush’s intentions could not have been thwarted. The character then says, “Exactly! Bush’s war is all about driving gas prices up!” Mallard replies, “Wait. Now gas prices are coming down!” as if such a thing could not occur against Bush’s will. The character concludes by saying, “Exactly! Bush’s war is all about cheap gas!!”

In the cartoon of 9/26/06, Mallard says, “I can’t believe that ABC caved in to powerful Democrats and *changed* its 9-11 program to make the Clinton administration look better!” Another character says, “I’m very surprised.” Mallard says, “That they did that?” The character answers, “No, that you can’t believe they did that.” Nor should it be surprising when conservatives try to make creationism look better than it is.

The next day, 9/27/06, Mallard reports, “After forcing ABC to change or cut portions of its T.V. movie ‘The Path to 9/11,’ Democrats, now drunk with power, are demanding that ABC call them ‘The Mighty Mighty Democrats,’ that Charles Gibson do the evening news in a tutu, and that Hillary Clinton be referred to in all news stories as ‘Da Man.’” Creationists, even when not “drunk with power,” are no less silly in their demands.

The following day, 9/28/06, Mallard says, “In a moment, I’ll be presenting the prestigious ‘Golden Weenie Award’ to ABC, for caving in to Democrats demanding that it change its TV movie, ‘The Path to 9/11.’ You’d better look now because you won’t be seeing this award presentation on ABC, due to Democrats’ demands that it not be shown.” If Democrats are not to be accommodated, then neither are Republicans. Caving in to creationists makes one equally deserving of a “Weenie Award.”

Continuing on the topic the next day, 9/29/06, Mallard says, “You know what’s worse than ABC caving in to powerful Democrats and *changing* its 9-11 T.V. program to keep Bill Clinton from looking bad? The fact that the other networks haven’t challenged ABC over it! Can you *imagine* what would happen if ABC changed its programming to keep President *Bush* from looking bad?” Another character replies, “You mean *other than* the ABC Evening News being four minutes long?” It is also wrong for scientists not to challenge schools that cave in to creationists and change their curriculum to keep creationism from looking bad. Creationists rarely offer more than a four-minute version of evolution so as to exclude most of the work of living scientists.

In the cartoon of 9/30/06, Mallard says, “ABC caved in to pressure from powerful Democrats and changed parts of its TV show, ‘The path to 9/11,’ that made the Clinton administration look partially responsible for 9-11!” Another character says, “They didn’t ‘cave in’! Look, most reporters and editors are Democrats, so they were just caving in to themselves! If you’d gone to journalism school, you’d know this stuff.” Reporters and journalism school are



irrelevant to a work of fiction, even when conservatives are the ones depicted in such shows. Mallard does not state whether the TV show was more *accurate* before or after the changes. He implies only a desire to make Clinton look bad, regardless of the facts. At least it is reassuring that Mallard is not “beating the . . . story to death.”

In the cartoon of 10/1/06, a dinosaur says, “Hi. It’s me, the conventional wisdom, again, here to praise the noble, selfless civil servant. Federal employees are underpaid but get their satisfaction from serving the people!” Mallard then says, “Whoa, there C.W.! You’re living in the past again! Federal civilian workers now average exactly *twice* the pay and benefits of private-sector employees!” The dinosaur says, “Debunking the conventional wisdom is a slippery slope! Next, you’ll be saying World War II, not F.D.R., ended the Depression!” Mallard says, “Ya think?” The dinosaur says, “As sure as the sun orbits the earth, you \*@##@! heretic!” No more nostalgia should be felt for creationism than for geocentricity. Also, Mallard *defends* living in the past (dial-up internet) in the cartoons of 1/10/05 and 8/7/06.

In the cartoon of 10/6/06, a character says, “I’m sending Heather Bob Dylan’s new C.D.. Maybe *he* can talk some sense into her! I just can’t *believe* my little girl’s a conservative!” Mallard says, “Hey, ‘the times they are a’ changin’.” Tautologically, the function of conservatism is to conserve, not to change, which is why science tends to leave them in the dust.

In the cartoon of 10/8/06, a shark laments, “We had the ‘feeding-frenzy’ market cornered for 300-million years until the @\*##@!! media showed up,” as if the news media were meant to keep secrets.

In the cartoon of 10/17/06, Bill Clinton says, “Look, the debate is over! I say Fox News is biased, so it must be biased! After all, if you can’t trust a truthful guy like me, who can you trust?” Talk is cheap, such that, in a sense, no one is to be trusted. Similarly, the bias of the mainstream media is not rendered factual simply by the assertion of Fox News. Also, neither Al Gore nor any particular person is to be trusted about global warming. Rather, it is proper science that is to be *recognized*, even though many are unable to distinguish it from a hole in the ground.

In the cartoon of 10/18/06, Mallard says, “Let’s say, for the sake of argument, Bill Clinton’s *right*, and Fox News *is* biased. That would leave, say, *four* networks in the *liberal* majority and *one* in the conservative *minority*. Wow. We need ‘affirmative action’ for right-wing media.” If, as conservatives assert, it is wrong for liberals to approve of affirmative action, then so it is for conservatives. The conservative principle is: lump it. Let it be so.

In the cartoon of 10/20/06, Mallard reports, “This just in: In an attempt to garner even more media attention to his every waking moment, Bill Clinton has hired Terrell Owens’ publicist,” as if Bruce Tinsley kept his opinions private and did pour them into a daily cartoon distributed nationally.

In the cartoon of 10/23/06, Mallard asks, “Remember when Democrats were *outraged* when one of their own, Congressperson Gerry Studds had *physical* not *virtual*, sex with a 17-year-old male intern, and *kept* his job? Remember the incessant *media coverage*? Oh yeah. Neither do I.” Remember when conservatives were outraged by the crimes against logic and reality committed by creationists who keep their jobs? Let it not be pretended that this writer is standing in the way of such outrage.

In the *9 Chickweed Lane* cartoon of 10/23/06, a character says to Dr. Burber, “For me, your class was a turning point. It was at that time I realized I wanted to be a vet. Then you nearly flunked me. You didn’t use a grade curve. Premeds were washing out. You said, if we got A’s we’d know it was because we were the best, not the least bad. That was the kind of vet I wanted to be.” “And are you?” asks Dr. Burber. The vet says, “Bulls and bulldogs don’t grade on a

curve. Adequacy isn't an option." The following day (10/24/06), Dr. Burber asks, "So where did you go to vet school?" The vet replies, "Cummings, at Tufts. And I don't think I would have gotten in if it hadn't been for you. You were so uncompromising and rotten and mean. For years I've wanted to tell you off, and thank you." Dr. Burber says, "Oh, any time." All are equally welcome to the rigor of this writer, which are those of logic.

In the cartoon of 10/26/06, Mallard says, "We should always be grateful that we don't have a government that stifles dissent! In America that's Ivy League colleges' job." Several nonlethal examples are then given that hardly equate to the murders of abortion providers committed by conservatives such as James Kopp. Creationism is not so much stifled in colleges as denied social promotion and affirmative action in accordance with conservative principles, thus sparing it the humiliation of well-earned ridicule.

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 10/26/06, a bumper sticker is offered that reads, "Silly liberals. Governing's for grown-ups." Something similar tends to be true with respect to conservatives and science.

In the cartoon of 10/29/06, a policeman on television says, "Remember, 'click it, or ticket!' Buckle up! It's the law!" Mallard responds, "Um, excuse me, Mr. T.V. policeperson, but while we're on the subject of 'the government knows what's best for me,' are you having trouble 'buckling up' yourself? That's because so many of you are so darn fat!! Sure, you're 'only hurting yourselves,' you say. Well how about the bad guys you can't waddle fast enough to catch? Or my tax dollars paying for your quadruple bypass? So remember, 'work out, don't pork out'! It's not the law, but it should be." If wearing a seatbelt is *not* best for Mallard, then what is? What about the concepts that Mallard's mind can't waddle fast enough to catch? The relevance of constabulary obesity highlights how cartoonists can get away with being obese and much more besides. How about *everyone's* tax dollars paying for the trauma sustained by people irresponsibly not wearing seatbelts? Even though Mallard would hold police responsible for being fit, it is sad that cartoonists are not more responsible for being logically and grammatically competent. Police are not the only people who could benefit from fitness. However, according to the conservative principle of deregulation, very little should be the law. Specifically, consider the cartoon of 10/21/06, titled "News from the future," in which Mallard sarcastically reports, "Restaurateur William Wallace Thomson, of Austin, Texas, now says that he will appeal his August 28 conviction on charges of selling fatty foods to a minor." Therefore, even though minors may benefit from fitness, it should not be "the law," *according to Mallard*. The cartoon of 10/22/06 then ridicules "Big Media" for doing "152 obesity-study stories this year alone!" Perhaps jealousy motivates Mallard when he does his own. He has also been featured in at least as many concerning the folly of liberals, proving that quantity alone is not the issue for him. In the cartoon of 11/23/06, Mallard says, "Stuff yourself this Thanksgiving before it's too late. Next year we could be *even more* of a 'nanny state.' And possession of food filled with sugar, fat or grease could earn you a visit from the fat-police!" though just a few days before, Mallard himself was the nanny by insisting that the police not be fat. With respect to police, he *demand*s more of a nanny state. And Mallard himself acknowledges the existence of an obesity epidemic *in spite of* the nanny state. If standards of fitness are to be applied to the police, then let standards of logic be applied in academia, if not in cartooning.

In the cartoon of 10/30/06, Mallard says, "Everything is America's fault, and you're not paying enough in taxes!! I was too cheap to spring for a costume, so I decided to be a liberal for Halloween. Pretty scary, eh?" Equally scary are those who think that nothing *could* be America's fault. At the time of this cartoon, *someone* was not paying enough in taxes because there existed

a federal deficit. If the issue was government spending, then it could not be blamed on liberals, since this was when Republicans controlled both the executive and legislative branches of government.

In the cartoon of 10/31/06, Mallard says, “Score another point for American innovation. We’re now the first nation in recorded history to have fat prisoners of war,” as he reads a newspaper bearing the headline “Gitmo prisoners gain average of 20 pounds.” Nowhere is the possibility denied that said prisoners entered the camp 25 pounds underweight, leaving the reader waiting for another shoe to drop. By now, one should know better than to hold one’s breath.

On his television show, 10/31/06, Sean Hannity disapprovingly quoted John Kerry as saying that American troops have no reason to terrorize innocent Iraqi civilians. It is assumed that Hannity is of the same opinion. If Hannity believes that American troops *do* have reasons for such behavior, this writer would love to hear them.

In the cartoon of 11/6/06, Mallard says, “Tomorrow is election day, so please, if you had no idea who your congressman was until you saw his or her campaign ads, don’t vote!” Following this conservative principle, let those unfamiliar with science “shut up and plow.”

In the cartoon of 11/7/06, after Mallard says, “Happy election day,” and after a character displays cluelessness, Mallard says, “If you know someone in this condition, please take his car keys until tomorrow. Remember, ‘friends don’t let friends vote stupid.’” This applies equally well to stupidity regarding abortion, stem cells and evolution.

In the cartoon of 11/8/06, Mallard says, “Now that married people are statistical minorities, in a nation in which ‘minority’ status is sacrosanct, does it portend the end of stand-up comedy as we know it?” A comic is then seen saying, “My brother’s wife is so lazy, that . . .” while the audience responds, “Hate speech!! Hate speech!!” Nor is it hate speech to acknowledge the arithmetically obvious explanatory inferiority of creationism. Also, the majority may rule, but holding majority status “sacrosanct” would simply be an *argumentum ad populum*. Tinsley faults liberals for saying “Hate speech!” but conservatives are not above this tactic. In the *Los Angeles Times*, 7/28/05, Margaret Carlson cites Joseph Cella, president of the Catholic advocacy organization Fidelis, describing as “hate politics” a question asked by Barbara Walters (“Do you think [being Catholic] might affect [John Roberts] as a Supreme Court justice?”). Conservatives are also quick to call attacks “mean-spirited” when they are unable to call them wrong.

In the cartoon of 11/9/06, Mallard says, “Responding to the news that married people are now officially a minority in the U.S., liberal politicians today began reflexively pandering to them.” The majority may rule, but the *argumentum ad populum* is fallacious, such that pandering to the majority is not necessarily any better. Also, focusing attention on minorities is often no more than proper triage.

In the cartoon of 11/10/06, Mallard says, “Now that married people are, statistically, minorities in the U.S., the benefits could be huge!!” A character then says to a couple, “You’re married?! Well, forget those average grades and mediocre S.A.T. scores! Welcome to Harvard!” Unmerited social promotion and affirmative action are no less absurd when applied to creationism and its below-average, atrocious cladogram diagnostic scores.

In the cartoon of 11/11/06, Mallard says, “Now that married people are America’s newest minority, we’d like to get a reaction from some actual married people.” A couple then says, “As minorities, we now prefer the term ‘people of marriage.’” The corresponding politically correct term for creationists would then be “people of intellectual cowardice” or the “logically challenged,” though conservative opposition to political correctness would seem to demand “idiots,” a term used even by Mallard (10/9/05, 4/7/06, 11/18/06, 2/26/07, 4/14/07, etc.).

In the cartoon of 11/12/06, Mallard thinks, "It's happening again. I make up something preposterous in this comic strip, just to be funny and then it happens, in real life! In this case New York and Chicago are both considering making some fatty foods illegal to serve in restaurants! You know what that means? That this comic strip should never show a giant meteor hitting the earth or senator Clinton showing up for work naked." It may be legitimately wondered whether nudity on the part of Bruce Tinsley would any less unpleasant.

In the cartoon of 11/13/06, Mallard reports, "This year, Kurt Cobain beat Elvis to lead *Forbes'* list of 'top-earning dead celebrities.' Steven Spielberg tops its list of earners among *living* celebrities, while the magazine was, once again, unsure as to which category Rolling Stones guitarist Keith Richards belonged in." Mallard obviously belongs in the category of preposition danglers.

In the cartoon of 11/17/06, Mallard warns, "Do not judge *all* fruitcakes by the bad taste of a few, or you could get in trouble . . . with the A.C.L.U.!" Similarly, one should allow for the explanatory superiority of those scientific theories of which one has never heard.

In the cartoon of 11/18/06, a letter reads, "dear Mallard, We appreciate your exposé of the boorish idiots who make the same hackneyed, trite jokes that everybody's heard a million times about fruitcakes. We're wondering if you can do anything for us. Sincerely, The International Mime Association." Mallard then says, "Wow. I didn't even know they could write." Substitute "liberals" for "fruitcakes" and consider Mallard's own record of redundancy. And, as with mimes, perhaps little in the way of logic and grammar should be expected of cartoonists, to say nothing of creationists.

In the cartoon of 11/22/06, Mallard reports, "A new Harvard study shows that red wine can help prolong the lives of obese mice, while ignoring the question of how we happen to be the only nation in the world with a mouse-obesity problem." We have fat mice because we have fat humans on whom many forms of research are prohibited. Conservatives oppose the banning of trans fats, and if people could be trusted to abstain from eating them, then far fewer of them would be obese.

In the cartoon of 11/25/06, a letter reads, "Dear Mallard, Why didn't you do more commentary on John Kerry's 'stupid-servicemen' joke? Sincerely, Angry." Mallard responds, "Dear Angry, The feeling here was that the term 'John Kerry Joke' was redundant," as is the term "creationism joke."

In the cartoon of 11/27/06, Mallard offers a "sympathy card for the G.O.P.," which begins, "Lots of conservative voters stayed home / just to make the point / that you should 'dance with who brung you.'" In science, the only legitimate bringing is done by logic. Love it or "Fetch!"

Dennis Prager denied comparing the Koran and *Mein Kampf* after claiming (townhall.com, 11/28/06) that the Koran is an inappropriate document for the swearing in of a government official, as is, according to him, *Mein Kampf*. Thus, according to him, the two documents are *comparably* inappropriate. This is not to say that they are *equally* inappropriate, which would be a quantitative statement. Rather, it is merely a qualitative statement that allows for differential impropriety.

Prager himself subsequently acknowledged this (townhall.com, 12/5/06), writing, "All those who wrote that I 'compared' the Koran to 'Mein Kampf' are lying. . . . I simply offered a slippery slope argument . . . . A slippery slope argument is not an equivalence argument."

Whether or not a slippery slope argument is an equivalence argument, it is a fallacy. Prager cites left-wing blogs as examples of the “loathing of higher civilization,” from which Prager himself abstains when arguing fallaciously, another example being when he appeals to tradition (*argumentum ad antiquitatem*). As a further example, his original essay is titled, “America, Not Keith Ellison, Decides What Book a Congressman Takes His Oath on,” complete with dangling preposition.

Prager opines parenthetically that “intellectual life on conservative radio is far more diverse than intellectual life at most American universities.” The main goal of “intellectual life” is to be right, not diverse. Prager writes disapprovingly of “all those who believe that one of the greatest goals of America is to be loved by the world.” Similarly, intellectual life is not obliged to accept uncritically the trappings of the intellectually inferior, including fallacies and dangling prepositions.

Prager’s critics are not lying if the word *compare* allows for the differential impropriety in his thesis. Does it? In *Webster’s New Twentieth Century Dictionary*, *compare* is defined, in part, as “to set or bring (things) together in fact or in contemplation, and to examine the relations they bear to each other, especially with a view to ascertain their agreement *or disagreement*, points of resemblance *or difference*.” *The Winston Dictionary* gives: “to examine in order to discover likeness *and unlikeness*.” “To examine in order to note the similarities *or differences* of,” says *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*. The primary definition at Dictionary.com is: “to examine . . . in order to note similarities *and differences*.” The definitions given by the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary include: “to examine the character or qualities of especially in order to discover resemblances *or differences*.” (In all these examples, emphasis was added.)

Therefore, the word does indeed allow for differentiation, and lying is not involved *according to the dictionary*, unless it is Prager’s contention that the dictionary is lying, which would border on the oxymoronic. Prager can avoid “an equivalence argument” while still conducting a comparison, though this sadly seems to be news to him. If nothing else, it should be common knowledge that when consumers are invited to compare prices, it is assumed that the exercise will be fruitful due to differential pricing. One should also be aware of the phenomenon of something being compared unfavorably to another.

Prager cites his critics as examples of liberal hate and dishonesty. He himself demonstrates that with which civilized people must contend, for it is not for Dennis Prager to decide the meanings of words for his own convenience. Liberals may loath “higher civilization,” though the highest is clearly not practiced by all conservatives. Prager is cordially invited to join a civilization higher than his own. On his radio program, 1/12/09, he attributed to the political left an anti-authoritarian narcissism. If Prager wishes not to live in a glass house, then let him yield to the authority of the dictionary.

Prager has said elsewhere that citing evil is sometimes considered worse than committing it. If this should not be, then let it neither apply to the citation of his own failings. It is no more wrong to do this than it is for Bruce Tinsley to correct the mispronunciation of *forte*.

While on the topic of Prager, one day on his television program, he was commenting on the duty of his generation to have served in Vietnam and on the impropriety of those who shirked that responsibility. When a caller noted that Prager himself did not so serve, Prager cut off the caller, explaining that he assumed that said caller was about to assert that Prager could not offer valid criticism without such experience. Prager need not have served in order to express valid insights on the matter. The point is that whatever one’s duty at the time, Prager somehow

managed to find an excuse for not participating, as did many others. The superiority of Prager's excuse relative to those of the people he denounced has not yet come to the attention of this writer.

In the cartoon of 11/29/06, Mallard characterizes the Democratic party as having "no agenda or clue." Creationists similarly lack the latter, though seldom the former.

In the cartoon of 12/3/06, a sportscaster reports, "Since we only have seven minutes for tonight's sports news, we're just going to tell you which pro athletes *weren't* arrested today." One could similarly save time noting those cartoons in which Mallard did not embarrass himself via fallacy or folly. Meanwhile, the *Prickly City* cartoon of 12/7/06 bemoans the apparent scarcity of Republicans who are not "in jail or outed."

In the cartoon of 12/5/06, Mallard claims to be "workin' on my most 'tolerant,' 'inclusive,' 'diverse' politically correct 'holiday card' yet!" It is the responsibility of science to be no more tolerant and inclusive of explanatory failure than Mallard is of non-Christians, except, as he is, via sarcasm.

In the cartoon of 12/7/06, Mallard notes the date "so future generations don't grow up thinking 'Pearl Harbor' was a '90s grunge band." Many in the present generation (and others) similarly cannot distinguish science from a hole in the ground.

In the cartoon of 12/10/06, Mallard claims that Wal-Mart "saves folks more money than food stamps! And the 'earned-income tax credit!' Way more, in fact, than 'Uncle Sam' does. (You heard me, lefties; I said it.) But now I find myself wondering (in fact, I'm counting the ways) if saying that something 'works better than government' is not 'damning it with faint praise.'" It is not asserted in the cartoon whether Wal-Mart affords any *net* saving to people given the supposed tax burden of paying for the health care of uninsured Wal-Mart employees. Saying that something explanatorily works better than creationism is similarly trivial.

In the cartoon of 12/11/06, Mallard offers "mall-store lunch-meat gift baskets" as part of his series of "worst 'holiday' foods," saying, "Typically given to co-workers and others whom one feels obligated to 'give something' to, these bland sausages and pasturized-processed-cheese-food baskets are never actually eaten, but passed down generations, to become cherished heirlooms." Similarly, religious creation stories propagate down through the generations but are scientifically useless, except perhaps within anthropology.

In the cartoon of 12/12/06, Mallard says of fake eggnog, "Yet another example of something that should either be homemade or *not* made." Similarly, invalid arguments and grammatical errors are good for entertainment purposes only.

In the cartoon of 12/14/06, Mallard designates his "worst 'holiday' food #35 as, "Anything made with canned cream of mushroom soup: Developed for covert military applications, this product became declassified in the late fifties, when it began showing up in inedible gravies and casseroles. It has enjoyed a renaissance in the 21st century, thanks largely to 'how far into the yard can you throw the inedible casseraole' contests." Creationism, too, is good for little more than this.

In the cartoon of 12/16/06, Mallard identifies turkey as another "worst 'holiday' food," saying, "While turkeys *can* be delicious, most American families, driven by a primitive cultural urge, cook one only once a year; How good are people at *anything* they only do once a year? (The Academy Awards ceremony, for instance.)" Thinking about science would be another example.

In the cartoon of 12/17/06, Mallard warns, “Parents! Be very careful about reading books to your children, or one day, when you least expect it, they’ll start reading them to you.” Mallard, among others, could certainly benefit from having certain books read to *him*.

In the cartoon of 12/18/06, Mallard condemns the use of instant mashed potatoes, saying that they “come in an easy-open cylindrical container, which is also where most of them end up,” referring to a trashcan. Creationism deserves no better.

In the cartoon of 12/19/06, Mallard opines that the use of canned cranberry sauce says, “I’m too lazy to boil water”! Being too lazy to study science is one explanation, along with cowardice, for creationism.

In the cartoon of 12/20/06, Mallard offers “artificial, non-dairy ‘whipped topping’” as one of his “worst ‘holiday’ foods,” saying, “There’s million’s of folks out there now who can’t even comprehend how there could be *real* whipped cream, much less even dream it’s got something to do with a cow.” No fewer are clueless about science.

In the cartoon of 12/21/06, Mallard offers “top-of-the-stove ‘stuffing’” as one of his “worst ‘holiday’ foods,” saying, “So easy to make, it’s incredible! The taste, though, is rather regrettable. So keep the container, and toss the remainder, ’cause who knows? The box may be edible.” Creationism is equally useless, however easy it may be to invent.

In the cartoon of 12/26/06, Mallard offers a New-Year’s resolution for cows, one of which says, “The U.N. says my ‘emissions’ are worse for the planet than cars’. I resolve to hold ’em in. But don’t be too shocked when you see me floating up toward Mars.” Being so critical of the U.N., Mallard would be expected to dismiss this claim based on the source. Otherwise, it is simply one more argument for vegetarianism.

In the cartoon of 12/27/06, Mallard offers a New-Year’s resolution for the G.O.P. that begins, “I resolve to grow a new backbone and to stop being ‘centrist.’” Nor can science legitimately make any concessions to popularity.

In the cartoon of 12/30/06, Mallard offers the following New-Year’s resolution for the U.S. Postal Service: “U.P.S. and FedEx put your box by your door, while we leave it out in your driveway. I resolve not to even do *that* anymore. I’ll just drop it out on the highway.” Creationism similarly fails to deliver.

In the cartoon of 1/1/07, Mallard offers a New-Year’s resolution for Iran’s president: “I resolve that no holocaust happened. I get criticized for my zeal. But I don’t think *everything’s* made up. I still believe pro wrestling’s real.” Evolution denial and creationism deserve similar derision.

In the cartoon of 1/2/07, Mallard offers a New-Year’s resolution for cows: “I resolve not to pass any more bovine gas. That hurts all that ozone up there. So says the U.N.. But while *I* hold *mine* in, *they* keep emitting hot air,” as do creationists and Tinsley himself.

In the cartoon of 1/3/07, Mallard offers a New-Year’s resolution for the new congress: “I resolve to raise middle-class taxes. In fact, I’ll raise ’em plenty! ’Cause folks who vote for me are so rich, they don’t care or so poor that they’re not paying any!” All that counts is that these groups form a majority. Analogous to the latter group, creationism results from a lack of intellectual capital.

In the cartoon of 1/5/07, Mallard offers the following New-Year’s resolution: “I resolve not to watch so much boxing. For the good bouts, they all make you pay. Now, when I want to see brawling, I’ll just flip on the NBA.” When this writer wants to see illogic and ignorance of science, he will observe paleocons.

In the cartoon of 1/8/07, Mallard attributes the following “2007 New-Year’s resolution” to Hillary Clinton: “I resolve not to run for president. No! Wait! That’s not what I *really* meant! I meant to say that I’m gonna run! (unless I don’t.) Hey! This is fun!” As noted previously, self-contradiction is far from unknown to Mallard.

In the cartoon of 1/9/07, Mallard offers the following New-Year’s resolution for NFL players: “We resolve not to smile when we make a T.D., or laugh, jump, or clap, or shout with glee, cause the league only wants us to get our jobs done and flag us if it looks like we’re having fun.” Neither is science to be bashful about its triumphs. Thus does Mallard approve of the thrill of victory expressed by this writer.

In the cartoon of 1/11/07, Mallard offers the following New-Year’s resolution for himself: “I resolve to keep boycotting China. As long as its government stands, I’d rather spend money on stuff I can use without getting blood on my hands.” Creationism is to be boycotted to avoid getting metaphorical blood on one’s hands intellectually for crimes against logic.

In the cartoon of 1/12/07, Mallard says, “Gee, NBC, ABC and CBS just keep losing viewers to Fox News, making the term ‘big three’ about as meaningful as it is to U.S. automakers,” as he reads a newspaper with the headline “Toyota to pass G.M. in total sales.” Mallard makes no quantitative claims, such that losing viewers remains consistent with having vastly more than Fox. Foreign automakers may vastly outsell G.M. worldwide while still leaving three U.S. companies to outsell all foreign automakers domestically.

In the cartoon of 1/13/07, a voice on television says, “Coming up, our exclusive interview with Ophelia Kretch, the only known person still watching network T.V. news.” At best, this can only be a setup for an *argumentum ad populum*. The following day (1/14/07), Tinsley ridicules C.B.S. for trying “to boost it’s [sic] ratings.”

In the cartoon of 1/15/07, Mallard assures Iraqis that “Saddam Hussein is still dead.” In the cartoon of 9/2/06, he defines “liberal” as “someone who’s certain that Mel Gibson is antisemitic and the United Nations isn’t.” Conservatives seem to think that Saddam Hussein is still dead and creationism isn’t, not to mention Jesus.

In the cartoon of 1/17/07, Mallard says, “For all of you readers who keep saying I’m against all bowl games: Play the bowl games, then have a playoff. Just one or two games would be great! And for those who differ, I have just two words. One’s ‘Boise,’ the other one’s ‘State.’” An alternative would be to adopt the creationists’ strategy of saying that they are “all just teams,” regardless of records or scores.

In the cartoon of 1/21/07, Mallard goes “out on a limb” with his “final 2007 New-Year’s predictions,” including: “Under pressure from the D.N.C., senator Kennedy will take classes to learn how to pronounce ‘Barack Obama.’” Kennedy mispronounced the name no more often than Tinsley misspelled “its” or dangled prepositions, making the former’s need for “classes” no greater than the latter’s. Mallard concludes, “We’ll never again see the like of brilliant, witty, humble, amazing economist Milton Friedman, whom our nation lost in November 2006.” Brilliance, wit and humility are certainly not to be expected from Tinsley.

In the cartoon of 1/23/07, Mallard thinks, “Wow! The F.D.A. has approved a new drug to handle the national dog-obesity epidemic! I wasn’t aware that we had a serious fat-dog problem.” A voice on television then reports, “Callous conservatives indifferent to looming dog-obesity epidemic!” It is correctly observed that mere ignorance does not necessarily make one callous.

In the cartoon of 1/25/07, Mallard says, “The Chinese health ministry reports that a ‘shocking’ epidemic of childhood obesity has hit China, which, unlike freedom, democracy, or



the respect for human rights, may be something they picked up from us.” Similarly, one’s breath should not be held while waiting for creationists to pick up logic from scientists.

After all the examples of logical failure given above, the cartoon of 1/26/07 demonstrates that in the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king. Mallard says, “In anticipation of your self-righteous outrage at my assertion in yesterday’s cartoon that they eat dogs in China: they really do eat dogs in China. This doesn’t mean that everyone in China eats dogs, or that you don’t know a Chinese person who doesn’t. I hope this logic lesson is helpful, especially to the crazy, illogical people who e-mail me about such things. Wait! That doesn’t mean every illogical person is crazy, or . . . .” It is in this same sense that Christians really do murder abortion providers. It is also hoped the logic lesson embodied in these essays may be helpful to poor Mallard. If not, then let him not expect to be socially promoted. Rather, he will continue to provide excellent logic lessons by way of counterexample. Thus does absurdity provide the “balance” so many seek in opposition to science.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 1/27/07, Douglas Love writes, “Movie critic Kenneth Turan has lost all credibility as a journalist in his review of ‘Zoo’ when he says, ‘But remarkably, an elegant, eerily lyrical film has resulted.’ Sorry, Mr. Turan, there can be nothing elegant about any film that discusses (and by extension grants approval of) sexual contact between humans and animals. This is a disgusting and horrific concept. Is there *anything* left that our society will reject as being simply wrong?” In a letter that also “discusses” this topic, how is it that Mr. Love does not, “by extension,” grant approval of it? If he does not, then neither of necessity does the film. Given his apparently inadvertent self-contradiction, how much “credibility” could Love retain? He never denies the possibility that the film discusses this “disgusting and horrific concept” and then concludes, like Love, that it is “simply wrong.” Also, obviously, such elements as music, cinematography and art direction can be independently elegant despite the narrative, just as Love’s penmanship may be elegant even if logic fails him, or if, in accordance with the emotive theory of ethics, he employs a rationalization typical of those incapable of cool, sober appraisal.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 1/29/07, Lawrence H. Summers writes, “Matters are not helped when the president advocates the teaching of intelligent design alongside evolution as a ‘different school of thought.’” It *should* be thus taught, but not merely as different, but as worse. The numbers 2 and 3 are not merely different. The former is less than the latter.

In the cartoon of 1/31/07, Howard Dean says of his 2004 presidential campaign, “I would’ve won, if I weren’t nuts!” Previously, in the cartoon of 3/24/06, Mallard contrasts Howard Dean with “someone in his right mind.” Subsequently, in the cartoon of 7/19/05, it is implied that Howard Dean is insufficiently “calm, civil and rational.” Therefore, according to Mallard, politicians are “nuts” if they emote, while NFL football players are victims of persecution if they do not (1/9/07). (Incidentally, in the *Prickly City* cartoon of 7/25/05, “The Dean Scream” is ridiculed, as it continues to be, *ad nauseum*, 7/26/05, 7/27/05, 7/28/05, 7/29/05 and 11/30/05.)

In the cartoon of 2/3/07, Mallard says, “The media keep saying that we’re ‘not yet ready for an African-American president. But I haven’t met a single person who thinks he or she wouldn’t vote for a candidate for that reason. Kinda makes you wonder if it’s the media that ‘aren’t ready for an African-American president.’” Mallard may simply not get around much. He has ample opportunity to meet people who are not the least bit ready for logic.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 2/7/07, Penny Peyser writes that “our public schools already inexplicably teach the history of other cultures before our own” and scolds liberals for

their “disdain for ‘*e pluribus unum*’ and a desire for its opposite.” Any such teaching is explained by the implied temporal sequence of starting with many and ending with one, and by the historical precedence established by cultures older than ours combined with the reasonable strategy of historical sequentiality in the teaching of history. It need be no more sinister than putting the horse before the cart.

The cartoon of 2/9/07 begins “Meanwhile, in a newsroom near you . . .” A character then says, “I thought we had a big story; Mallard Fillmore said he was going to threaten an African-American!” A second character says, “And he really just threatened a conservative African-American with a flood of e-mails, unless the guy runs for president!” The first character then says, “I’ve never felt so betrayed.” Mallard typically threatens to make a valid point, but often fails. Thus, for purposes of comedy and providing counterexamples for logic students, he seldom betrays the most cynical of expectations.

The cartoon of 2/11/07 begins, “As a public service of this newspaper and the foundation to keep guys from spending money on frivolous, overpriced cards, we once again provide this free Valentine’s Day card,” which reads, “Dear \_\_\_\_, You’re smart, and beautiful, too! Also, you smell very nice. You’ll get your gift on the 15th (when all of that stuff is half-price.)” Would that such parsimony extended to creationists’ logic.

The cartoon of 2/16/07, titled “Mallentine #27,” is addressed to Donald Trump and Rosie O’Donnell, and reads, “America’s getting real tired of your rift / over that dumb ‘Miss USA’ scandal. / So let’s order the U.N. to settle your tiff / (it may be the one job they could handle.)” As to Mallard’s capabilities, he at least knows that *media* is plural.

The cartoon of 2/17/07, titled “Mallentine #28,” features a man writing a card that reads, “‘The holidays are too commercial,’ ‘materialistic,’ you say. So why are you irrate that this card is late? What the heck. Happy ‘Presidents’ Day.’” Those who draw cartoons for greeting cards need to pay the rent every bit as much as those who draw them for newspapers.

In the cartoon of 2/18/07, Mallard reports, “The more liberal your politics are, the less you are likely to give to charities, sacred or secular, to help those less-fortunate live. And those who’re religious and tend to lean right, give one hundred times more than their left-secular friends, (who are tight, contrary to popular lore.) Still, the media spout ‘stingy-right-winger’ tripe, while libs say, ‘We’re the one group that cares.’ Of course liberals can be real generous types with taxpayers’ money, not theirs.” The first sentence is supported by the citation of a secondary source (a Jonah Goldberg column), making it mere hearsay. The second may possibly be stated per capita but is not adjusted for income. If one hundred times more is given by those who make one hundred times more, then nothing noteworthy has occurred. Conservatives may complain, but they seem to consider the remedy worse than the problem. Conservatives insist that charity be voluntary, want minimal taxation, minimal welfare, minimal redistribution of wealth to the poor, and for the poor to abandon something-for-nothing attitudes and to take responsibility for themselves. Liberals, and by extension conservatives, are either to be forced to be charitable or not. If not, then Mallard must lump it, for he opposes the alternative. The purpose of making charity voluntary is to allow for abstinence. Also see the cartoon of 12/23/06, in which faith-based generosity with other people’s money may be included in “the free exercise” of religion.

In the cartoon of 2/19/07, Mallard looks at a picture of Ronald Reagan and says, “What?! It’s ‘Presidents Day,’ right? So you celebrate your president, and I’ll celebrate mine.” Let Mallard celebrate his arguments while this writer celebrates better ones, for it should never be Fallacies Day.

In the cartoon of 2/20/07, a character says, “Oh. Hi. It’s me, the federal employee who had yesterday off while you were working! Did you miss me?” He then writes, “Note: We need federal regulations requiring people to miss us.” Just such regulations are required for science to miss God.

In the cartoon of 2/21/07, a character says, “I can’t believe it! Not only has my daughter become conservative since she went to college, but she’s bringing home her new conservative boyfriend to meet us! We don’t even know what conservatives eat!” Mallard replies, “Small children, mostly, and the occasional endangered species.” While conservatives may not eat endangered species, they lead the opposition to their preservation. Mallard’s stereotypes of liberals are a matter of record. He occasionally tries to cite some scientific study to bolster his claim, but, as noted above, many such attempts either turn out to be secondhand hearsay or are suspiciously elliptical, the latter being either because he realizes that the unrevealed information would undermine his argument, he is too stupid to realize that another shoe remains to be dropped, or he is depending on such stupidity in his target audience. By contrast, in the cartoon of 2/23/07, the following appears on Mallard’s television: “Hey, this is rebellious, anti-hero, cool, rebellious, rebel-type, really-cool-guy Dennis Hopper, for really cool retirement investment plans! Our really cool sixties generation isn’t ready for ‘retirement’ in the traditional sense. Heck, a lot of you’ve never even had jobs to retire from.” This time, no supposedly scholarly study is cited. The idea is cute, but an accent fallacy, because among registered Republicans there doubtless exist legions both of hillbillies who have never been employed and of heirs to fortunes who have never needed to be. Generalities, however, are painful to Mallard when he is on the receiving end, as in the cartoon of 2/14/07, where he says, “I actually got a Valentine! . . . that somebody actually sent! . . . addressed to *me*, ‘Mallard Fillmore’ . . . ‘or current resident.’”

The cartoon of 2/24/07 again features a commercial presented by Dennis Hopper, who says, “We sixties-generation types don’t wanna just sit around because we’ve hit ‘retirement age’! We wanna just sit around because we fried our brains forty years ago.” Apart from species affiliation, Mallard cannot always rely on such a convenient excuse.

It is reported in the cartoon of 2/26/07, “Ninety-eight percent of those surveyed in a new CBS news poll think all Republicans are idiots! It’s called a ‘CBS news poll’ because, to save time, we only polled people who work here at CBS news.” The actual percentage of idiocy among Republicans is not estimated, though there doubtless exists enough for all practical purposes.

In the cartoon of 3/2/07, a character says, “I’ve written a book about my ‘baby-boomer’ generation!” Mallard asks, “Uh, why?” The character says, “For the same reason that I was an independent-thinking, free-spirited hippie in the sixties! I wanted to be part of the crowd.” Independence of thinking is accompanied by freedom to criticize error. Even without wanting to, people will naturally form a crowd that believes that  $2+2=4$ . Tinsley himself saw fit to draw a cartoon about the generation in question to be part of the crowd of wage earners.

In the cartoon of 3/29/07, Mallard reports, “According to this book, fifty percent of U.S. high-school seniors think that Sodom and Gomorrah were married. Apparently, the people who want to ‘keep religion out of our schools’ are doin’ a heck of a job.” Letting it in results in equal absurdities, like the assertion that evolution and creation are both “just theories,” when arithmetic reveals the latter to be vastly inferior. Also, students (not to mention Tinsley) are ignorant of much more than religion.

In the cartoon of 3/31/07, Mallard observes, “Three weeks ago, we had 65 teams, and in two more days, we’ll have a champion. The American electoral process could learn a lot from

college basketball,” as could those creationists who are either too stupid or too cowardly to evaluate and rank theories.

In the cartoon of 4/9/07, Mallard observes, “Many Americans believe that, because their taxes are withheld, they don’t pay income tax! Know what’s even scarier? These same people are allowed to vote, drive, marry, and reproduce.” The same is true of creationists, though they can at least be denied the benefits of social promotion and affirmative action.

In the cartoon of 4/17/07, Mallard displays signs that collectively read, “Just paid my taxes . . . and the taxes of Americans who don’t pay any taxes . . . and the taxes if illegals.” Many of those who pay no taxes are rich, receive tax credits and exploit legal loopholes. Calling for tax increases for the rich would seem rather out of character for a conservative like Mallard, as indeed would his calling for tax increases for anyone. Resentment of supporting the rich through corporate welfare is a far more Naderesque trait than would be expected for Mallard. And what exactly are the taxes of those who do not pay them? There may be taxes owed but not paid, but there are surely also taxes that are simply not owed, which are thus paid by no one.

In the *Dilbert* cartoon of 4/21/07, the boss says, “Don’t feel bad if you only got a 3% raise; I only got 2% myself.” Another character says, “Can we feel bad that 2% of your pay is bigger than 3% of our pay?” The boss replies, “Don’t get all mathy on me.” Spoken like a true creationist. Many conservatives such as Mallard and Sean Hannity are perfectly content with incomplete statistics.

In the cartoon of 4/30/07, Mallard says, “To discuss the apparent double standard applied to race-based speech, etc., we’re joined via satellite by Al Sharpton to discuss ‘who decides what’s racist.’” Sharpton says, “I do, of course!” Mallard asks, “Isn’t that a little arbitrary?” Sharpton then says, “There! Calling the reverend Al’s proclamations arbitrary is racist, you racist!” Let no logical double standard be applied to creationism. Nothing could be less arbitrary than arithmetic, which is what decides explanatory utility in science. Thus do all logical losers eat the winner’s dust with absolutely perfect fairness.

Karen Malec, president of the Coalition on Abortion/Breast Cancer, reacting to a study published in April, 2007, showing no increased risk of breast cancer, said, “Clearly [the Cancer Institute] must suspect a link, or else they know that a link really exists. Why else would they continue to pay for these studies?” Suspicion, like talk, is cheap. “They” know a null hypothesis from a hole in the ground and know that such a link cannot be known of until grounds are provided for rejecting the null hypothesis. Malec criticized the design of the study, but the null hypothesis remains and it is her organization that bears the burden of proof.

In the cartoon of 5/1/07, Mallard says, “Reverend Sharpton, how can the media continue to take you seriously after your inciting anti-Jewish riots, Tawana Brawley . . .” Sharpton replies, “Speaking of the reverend’s past is racist! You’d know this stuff if you’d gone to journalism school.” Taking seriously people rather than concepts is the fallacious *argumentum ad hominem*, which Mallard would know had he gone to any school teaching logic.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 5/6/07, Keith Wheeler writes, “I thought being liberal meant embracing diversity. . . . Liberals not only don’t want to have anything to do with anything to do with anyone who has a different opinion than they do, they go so far as to personally attack those who do.” Only propriety is to be embraced, while diversity is merely to be tolerated, except perhaps in aesthetics. “Opinion” is far too often a euphemism for erroneous, or at least inferior, propositions. Conservatives routinely demand that liberals renounce their associates who misbehave, so let it be appreciated when they do, especially by those who reject social promotion. Those who underperform liberals are, in proper conservative fashion, free to eat

liberals' dust. Wheeler is right to condemn the *argumentum ad hominem*. In the present case, he himself should not be the target of attack, but his split infinitive is fair game.

In the cartoon of 5/9/07, Mallard reports, "This just in: At 7:52 EDT this morning, 'I have a "social conscience"' was officially replaced as the catch-phrase of self-righteous moral superiority with the even-more ambiguous 'I'm going green.'" The latter seems to this writer to be far *less* ambiguous. Mallard apparently considers his own moral superiority not to be of a self-righteous nature, though it is not always demonstrably legitimate, as explained throughout these essays. Very little other than self-righteousness is ever displayed by Mallard.

In the cartoon of 5/11/07, Mallard says, "The media have been doing their part for the environment for years . . . by recycling the same old stories." A voice on television then says, "Everything's America's fault, we're all too fat, and a new study says life can kill you." Mallard's own recycling is documented in these essays. The notion that nothing could be America's fault is no less absurd than the assertion made above. Not everyone is too fat, but Mallard is happy to remark on excessively fat policemen (10/29/06). As to life, mortality is almost universally inescapable.

In the cartoon of 5/22/07, Mallard offers "Failed reality-show concept #24: 'Queer Eye for the Straight Pet,' cancelled after producers' realization that a dog in a \$3,000 Vera Wang sweater still looks like a dog in a sweater." Such is the case for the sow's ear of creationism.

On his radio show 5/22/07, Michael Medved approved the use of the neologistic term *partial-birth abortion* because he thought the actual, proper name for the procedure was too difficult to say. So, if Medved's name is too difficult for *you* to say, just call him, with his approval, John Smith. Medved may not like the names of things, but that is just tough. Such alterations also serve as emblems of sociological and cultural affiliation, and this writer is pleased to avoid labeling himself as being of a stratum as low as Medved's. Medved cited John Edwards as saying of his \$400 haircut that it had been arranged by others and that he (Edwards) was not personally involved. Medved asked how anything could be more personal than a haircut. Physically yes, but in terms of scheduling and financing, it can well be handled by proxy such that the recipient of the haircut need not be personally involved organizationally or financially. Any ambiguity committed by Medved may thus be resolved to his detriment according to his own standards, especially since he also refused to accept Jimmy Carter's retraction of an unambiguous statement. Medved denied that the popular media are controlled by conservatives, citing liberal control only of rhetorical strategy. Liberals may well have rhetorical control, but financial control seems to be in the hands of conservative Moguls, though Medved is free to name all the liberal ones.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 5/27/07, Keith Wheeler writes, "I find that when someone makes personal attacks they do so because they can't or won't argue the facts. The question is, could a liberal sit down and discuss differences of opinion on issues without making it personal? I stick by my original comments that many liberals . . . can't – because they cannot tolerate an opinion different than theirs." In the case of mere opinion, tolerance is indeed a virtue. But when facts are argued, tolerating deviation from them violates the conservative doctrine of denial of social promotion, which is personal to the extent that it singles out individual perpetrators. Disqualifying an argument based on the character of the arguer is the fallacious *argumentum ad hominem*, while the opposite is the standard conservative doctrine of academic retention. The facts are true and all else is false. Also, contrary to Wheeler's accent fallacy, the intolerance he attributes to many liberals is equally true of many conservatives.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 5/27/07, Sam Dargan writes, “Fact: Creationists do not believe the Earth is flat.” Bully for them. They may as well, as this provides little consolation given what they *do* believe. Dargan continues, “Fact: There are serious scientific problems with evolution, and much anticreationist rhetoric is an attempt to protect evolution from scientific criticism.” It is a trivial fact that there are necessarily problems with all theories. Otherwise, science would be complete and scientists would have nothing to do. The problems with creationism are far worse, both qualitatively and quantitatively. Whatever the nature of “much anticreationist rhetoric,” there is no need to protect evolution from proper scientific evaluation, which yields it a clear, arithmetic victory that proves its superiority. It is creationism that survives only by unmerited social promotion and affirmative action. The letter continues, “Fact: Creationists make scientific arguments for their position while most of their critics only use attacks and try to define science in such a way as to rule out creationism on principle.” Predominance of “attacks” could only occur within casual, amateur criticism, as this is unnecessary for scientists. The errors of particular practitioners do not discredit the theory itself. Scientists make arguments that are not merely scientific but better. The attempt “to rule out creationism on principle” succeeds to the extent that creationists themselves define the problem oxymoronically such that the fulfillment of their burden of proof is impossible in principle. Idiots may be persuaded of anything, but creationism cannot win until logic itself is persuaded that 3 is less than 2. Dargan concludes, “A friendly suggestion: Get some open-minded reporter to read what creationists are saying, not what their enemies are saying about them, and publish a fair report.” Minds are to be open but not empty, and to be open-minded is to listen to both sides rather than ignore what “enemies are saying.” Creationists seem not to be smart enough to recognize fairness when it occurs. Creationism loses fair and square according to the least arbitrary standard possible: arithmetic. When Tiger Woods wins a golf tournament, is it “fair” to report that he did not? Blame not the messenger for creationism’s fair and objective loss. What is unfair is the artificial survival of an inferior explanation via something-for-nothing liberal social promotion and affirmative action. It is evolution that fails to get a fair airing by creationists when they attack not it but a straw man, leaving actual science unscathed (but also unacknowledged) and then thinking themselves worthy of a medal for exposing “serious problems” that exist nowhere but in their own imaginations. When the real problem are not enough, they dishonor themselves by concocting fictitious ones.

In May 2007, Elizabeth Hasselbeck criticized Rosie O’Donnell for not answering a rhetorical question, which is not to be answered.

Sometime early in 2007, Sean Hannity denounced a black church’s parochial focus on black concerns, but he also insisted on parochial regionality by denouncing Hillary Clinton as a carpetbagger. If politicians are to “stick to their own kind,” then so may churches. If ecumenical universality is sought, then let Clinton’s be appreciated.

In the cartoon of 6/1/07, Mallard offers “Reality-show spinoff #38: ‘Are You Smarter Than a *Home-Schooled* Fifth Grader?’” which features the challenge, “Name one of the authors of the ‘Federalist Papers,’ find the area of this octagon, and translate this passage from the ‘Aeneid’ into Latin.” Would that creationists were sufficiently well schooled to distinguish a cladogram from a hole in the ground and to employ sufficient logic to treat creationism *ad valorem* (*Palnam qui meruit ferat*).

On his radio show 6/1/07, Rush Limbaugh denounced the liberal principles of diversity for its own sake and equality of outcomes, saying that it is absurd for liberals to insist that “no one can be better than anyone else.” Therefore, according to conservative principles,

evolutionists, even if only by accident, outperform creationists and are therefore *better*, at least in this narrow, technical sense. Let not creationism benefit from what Limbaugh considers a bogus liberal doctrine.

In the cartoon of 6/4/07, Mallard watches a television show called “Are You Smarter Than a Pear?” and thinks, “Apparently the network thought ‘Are You Smarter Than a Fifth Grader’ was a bit elitist.” Nor, then, is it elitist to demonstrate arithmetically the inferiority of creationism.

In the cartoon of 6/8/07, Mallard says, “There’s been enough debate on the issue! I say now we just round up and deport everybody . . . at the network that cancelled ‘Veronica Mars’ and renewed ‘The Search for the Next Pussycat Doll.’” Nor do all theories deserve “equal time.”

In the cartoon of 6/14/07, a person says, “We camped out for four days for concert tickets! You can’t just cut in line!” The offender replies, “What’samatter? Ya never heard of amnesty?!” Neither should any special favors be done for creationism.

Reporting about a conservative website, Stephanie Simon writes in the *Los Angeles Times*, 6/19/07, “Conservapedia calls [the Pleistocene Epoch] ‘a theorized period of time’ – a theory contradicted, according to the entry, by ‘multiple lines of evidence’ indicating that the Earth is less than 10,000 years old, as described in the Book of Genesis.” The creationist alternative is equally theoretical and is contradicted to a vastly greater extent. Conservatives normally pride themselves on making more value judgments than liberals. In this case, however, either stupidity or cowardice prevents them, leaving them (in the absence of social promotion, which they reject) to eat the dust of those who do better. A spokesperson for the site says, “We have certain principles that we adhere to, and we are up-front about them. Beyond that we welcome the facts.” Those principles appear to include convenience and comfort at the expense of facts (and tolerance of dangling prepositions). Factuality is a principle itself, and a better one, because beyond facts are things that are worse. It is at least refreshing when conservatives “are up-front about” the lack of truth preservation in their principles.

On his radio program 7/12/07, Dennis Prager indulged in some traditional religionist self-congratulatory cherry picking by observing that secularists contribute less to charity. Whatever the impact in this one isolated category, the net effect on society may be offset by secularists’ underrepresentation among the impoverished, such that they take less as well as give less, their underrepresentation in the prison population (according to the Federal Bureau of Prisons) and their overrepresentation in scientific and technical fields. Overall, then, the proper response from secularists may be “You’re welcome.”

During a commercial for Direct.com on his radio show, 9/17/07, Michael Medved asked his audience, “You don’t want to overpay, do you?” Desired or not, overpayment is just that. Logical parsimony arithmetically determines explanatory power and the best explanation. Everything other than the best is tautologically worse due to explanatory overspending. Ironically, it is Medved’s audience that is disproportionately enriched with those intellectually or emotionally unable to avoid the logical overspending exemplified by theism and creationism.

In the cartoon of 11/19/07, Mallard asks whether Mr. Colbert of the “Colbert Report” can “be funny without a stable of writers.” Tinsley manages folly on his own.

In the cartoon of 11/28/07, a caricature of Hillary Clinton says, “My gender politics lie exactly between ‘I Am Woman, Hear Me Roar’ and ‘Those mean boys are ganging up on me!’ If I were a man, they’d just call it ‘triangulation!’” Perhaps Tinsley would like to employ a similar euphemism for his own folly.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 12/3/07, Joe Doremire writes, “Whether [capital punishment] causes pain is immaterial to the task at hand . . . . To the dead criminal, it doesn’t matter a bit.” Of course, the same is true of the criminal’s dead victim, yet Doremire would probably have factored in the victim’s pain when determining the criminal’s punishment. Pain is either relevant or not.

In the cartoon of 12/5/07, Mallard says, “Now that the Supreme Court has decided to hear a case challenging D.C.’s 31-year-old handgun ban, both sides are mobilizing. D.C. residents say they have a constitutional right to protect themselves, while spokespersons for the criminal community argue that arming law-abiding citizens could create a ‘hostile working environment.’” The Constitution offers no right to bear particular types of guns. Logic seems to bring hostility to the working environment of many conservatives, in spite of their duty to it.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 12/30/07, Mike Schooling writes, “If teacher James Corbett wishes to attack religion, he needs to get out of public school teaching. Attacking a person’s religion does not belong in high school or college. If Corbett wishes to teach religion’s role in history, he can do so. If he wishes to attack religious ideas, he needs to find another job.” School is a place of learning, where a critical lesson to be taught is that attacking ideas is the superior and civilized alternative to attacking people. The attacking of inferior ideas, as opposed to socially promoting them, belongs in high school and college and everywhere else. If Mr. Schooling does not realize these things, then he needs to find another mind.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 2/16/08, Andrew Klavan dreams of movies honored not for any entertainment value but for their harmony with conservatism. He commits a category error by fantasizing that Hollywood would reward propaganda operating at the expense of drama due to insufficiently sophisticated psychology. He writes of Hollywood’s “attempt to sanitize and glamorize” certain “irresponsible life-styles,” as if fiction could easily avoid doing so, and as if the alternative were not to glamorize a lifestyle, practiced by so many conservatives, that is irresponsible with respect to logic. He writes of films “attacking our soldiers and their mission,” though such attacks are far below the level of sticks and stones, and as if being “ours” justified their behavior via kin selection. He implies a belief that in journalism, “facts are supposed to shape the narrative, not the other way around.” Let this also be recognized in the field of science.

In the *Pearls Before Swine* cartoon of 3/30/08, a fable is told, the moral of which is, “[I]f you can’t make yourself better, make those around you worse.” Some are content to pretend that worsening has occurred, as when the pot calls the sugar black. Such is routinely the case with creationists.

An article by Richard Dawkins in the *Los Angeles Times* 4/18/08 prompted a flurry of intellectual failure in response, which was exhibited in letters printed 4/22/08:

Ken Savage writes, “Everyone has faith in something that is beyond science to prove.” This is untrue of this writer and of all who conduct science properly. “Science itself is based on the assumption that the universe is rational and logical and not absurd.” This is properly and not arbitrarily so, the burden of proof resting on absurdity. “Where did the Big Bang come from, and what existed before?” These are pseudoquestions, as neither space nor time nor even existence existed “before.” These concepts are simply not applicable beyond nature. “If it was all random, that is a faith assumption also.” If it was all random, then it was all random, whether or not any such assumption was ever made. Also, science does not contend that “it” was all random.

James McDermott writes, “Dawkins’ atheistic rants about creationism and God’s existence are tiresome.” which is not to say they are wrong. “It is not logically contradictory to hold both that God is the author of all that exists and that the Big Bang and evolution are the



ways God created and continues to create everything that exists. Neither statement can be proved nor disproved by science.” It is, however, the logical fallacy of the *argumentum ad ignorantiam* to fail to recognize that only one of these statements requires proof, as the more parsimonious of the two deserves presumption. A criminal defendant whose guilt can be neither proved nor disproved is innocent.

Paul Rosenberger writes, “[N]o matter how sophisticated our theories become, ultimately we cannot explain how the universe got started from nothing and why the world exists.” Rosenberger’s slothful induction fails to appreciate the insight that Edward P. Tryon had as early as 1973. He should thus exercise more caution when using the word *we*, as it does not include this writer. As to the world, that is a rather trivial matter of gravitational accretion. “This notion embodies the ultimate mystery of life, which is beyond our power to penetrate from a purely logical and philosophical point of view, and which we must accept on that basis and learn to live with.”

Rosenberger should ensure that these boundaries are properly positioned, and also “learn to live with” the possibility of others being able to perform beyond *his* powers.

William S. LaSor writes, “Either the universe has always existed, or it was created by someone who has always existed.” This false dichotomy ignores the fact that quantum fluctuation occurs in the absence of personality. “If the latter is improbable, as he claims, then why is not the former also?” The Big Bang model, for which LaSor does not allow, is also “improbable,” with Tryon’s version following a power law such that probability is a function of net energy.

“Without saying so explicitly, he clearly favors the former, which he is free to do.” It must be quite a relief to have LaSor’s permission. “Nonetheless, it would be interesting to know why he favors one and not the other.” It would be interesting to know why some people lack logical competence. The only legitimate excuse for having any such preference is that one has properly done the math. “Could it be that the latter might make moral claims on all of us, something that would threaten our desire to be morally autonomous?” It could be, but not uniquely so, as this is an accent fallacy. The claims made by “the latter” need not be made by a god, as ethics suffices. Ethics makes these demands whether God does or not, though not everyone has the ethical competence to realize this, thus the need for the religious *argumentum ad baculum*. There cannot be moral autonomy relative to right and wrong, to which origin scenarios are irrelevant. It could simply be that Dawkins can distinguish logic from a hole in the ground.

Elaine Fleeman writes, “How could natural selection create the first living cell? There is no advantage to non-living material becoming a living cell, so the process had to be pure chance, a result of random atoms forming thousands of extremely complex molecules within a few micrometers of each other at the same time.” Proliferational advantage is achieved by greater efficiency of replication. Not only did it not have to be “pure chance,” it could not be. There is precious little randomness in the way atoms form molecules. Macromolecules of much greater complexity form today not instantaneously but by mutual, reciprocal assembly. This would have been true prebiotically, where systems would have been vastly simpler. “It is statistically a highly improbable probable [sic] event, and it bears all the earmarks of design.” Design is something of which nature is capable, and nothing “highly improbable” is seriously proposed, except by straw men. “Evolutionists . . . have created a totalitarian science community in which everyone must parrot the party line and independent thought is not allowed.” Independent thought is always allowed, as is the evaluation thereof. When independent thought is arithmetically worse than “the party line,” let not the thinker be so liberal as to feel entitled to social promotion based on

multicultural immunity from judgment. And any such judgment will pale in comparison to the Inquisition. This writer welcomes every opportunity to enjoy the thrill of nonarbitrary, arithmetically determined victory, and is particularly amused when inferior thinking is rationalized as “independent.”

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 4/26/08, Carl Pearlston writes, “Your reviewer Mark Olsen obviously did not like *Expelled: No Intelligence Allowed*, and also rather obviously disagrees with the concept of intelligent design. His mocking savaging of the film as ‘a tiresome ideological bludgeon’ reveals that he, not the film, is the one with the agenda.” Pearlston writes as if a film on *any* subject could not be made poorly and as if the review could not simply be true and accurate. Actually, such a review is perfectly consistent with the film having agenda, and with that of the reviewer being logic, which is the best one possible and the agenda of this writer. It could simply be that the reviewer is too conservative to grant social promotion. The tag line for the film is: “Big science has expelled smart ideas from the classroom.” It does so by displacing them with smarter ones. It is ID that has failed to earn its way in because of its inferior explanatory power. Intelligence is allowed every bit as much as is guilt in the criminal courts, but they both rightly bear the burden of proof. Failure to understand this does not deserve to be called smart, even if legions remain smugly and blissfully ignorant of creationism’s abject failure.

On his radio show 5/15/08, Dennis Prager discussed the lack of evidence that secondhand smoke caused death. During the same hour, he conducted a commercial for a water purification system that he promoted on the basis of trace amounts of drugs detected in tap water. Quantitatively, drugs are invented with the intention of pharmaceutical benefit, while cigarette smoke is known to contain many toxins and carcinogens. The mere presence of the latter did not interest Prager. Qualitatively, there are no toxic substances, there being only toxic doses. Prager specified concentrations in neither cigarette smoke nor tap water. Prager ridiculed the lack of evidence for the hazards of smoke, but offered no greater amount of evidence for the hazards of tap water. If, as he claimed, many children are simply insensitive to secondhand smoke such that no harm is done by smoking in their presence, then such is the case with tap water, obviating the need to buy his sponsor’s water filter. If toxin-laden smoke is not to be avoided categorically, then, *a fortiori*, neither is tap water against which even less of a case has been made. It is as if the only difference between smoke and water were the check waved under his nose in the case of the latter. Similarly, when Rush Limbaugh was confronted with a petition signed by dozens of Nobel laureates, he said, “Who cares what they think?” but was simultaneously pleased to refer to “the genius engineers at Bose” because of what appeared to be an *argumentum ad crumenam*. Likewise, in 2009, Fox News commentators expressed dismay regarding the prison records of advisors to President Obama during programs interspersed with commercials featuring ex-jailbird G. Gordon Liddy trying to sell gold to their audience, which the network happily ran *because* the advertiser had paid for the privilege, not to mention the fact that Liddy is a *conservative ex-con*.

In the course of mocking the idea of polar bears being designated as “endangered,” Prager seems to have thought that he somehow rebutted the propriety of this by claiming that more polar bears exist now than did 80 years ago, as if these two propositions were somehow inconsistent. He never denied the possibility of polar bear populations being under any theoretical “endangered” limit either now or then, falsely equating “more” with “enough,” especially in view of a potential future threat. Otherwise, if it could be shown that there were more Jews in 1938 than there were 80 years earlier, then Hitler would be proved not to have been

a threat. Nor is population size in the past inconsistent with a precipitously downward trajectory now, similar that of European Jewry in the 1940s.

Prager claimed to be dedicated to truth, but obviously not categorically, given that he engages in religion, to which truth is irrelevant. He claimed that his policy was to tell the truth and then express his opinion. This writer's superior policy is to tell the truth and then do nothing else.

Prager bragged about always asking for the victims of secondhand smoke to be named. Let him name those who have died from tap water or gay marriage or exposure to public nudity.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 5/20/08, Jonah Goldberg similarly notes a quadrupling of the polar bear population in the last 50 years, but never demonstrates the adequacy of this increase. He then writes, "Never mind that full implementation of the Kyoto protocols on greenhouse gases would save exactly one polar bear, according to Danish social scientist Bjorn Lomborg." This is exactly correct, for it is proper science that is to be recognized, not scientists minded, especially those commenting on issues outside their specialty and those working in what is considered, especially by conservatives, a "soft" science. Goldberg also observes, "Plastic grocery bags are being banned all over the place, even though they require less energy to make or recycle than paper ones." Energy cost is not the only consideration. Lead pipes might be cheaper than copper ones, but lower toxicity in drinking water may be worth some extra expense. When Jerry Brown drove a cheap car while governor of California, conservatives derided him for it, demonstrating that economy *per se* is not a conservative concern. Just as there is no free lunch, neither may there be free environmental maintenance.

On his radio show 5/25/08, Dennis Prager claimed that everybody needs a religion, and that if a Judeo-Christian religion is not chosen, then a "secular religion" will be. As the phrase *secular religion* is oxymoronic, it would have been better to say philosophy. He then blamed Democrats for being preoccupied with biodegradable balloons while genocide is occurring in Africa. This conforms to the Limbaugh doctrine of absolute triage, but Prager himself occupied himself with merely talking about it, it being not sufficiently important to him to go to Africa and help. If Prager can offer help in this cause remotely and indirectly, then so can Democrats. If he offers a division-of-labor excuse to the effect that fighting in Africa is someone else's job, then let him choose a profession better aligned with his own standards of what is important. Prager then claimed not to be physiologically or mentally impaired in spite of not being breast fed and having been exposed to secondhand smoke as a child. The proposition that breastfeeding elevates IQ is not refuted by Prager's observation, as he alone is statistically insignificant, though it does demonstrate his inability to distinguish proper experimental design from a hole in the ground, making him doubly wrong. It is as if Prager would deny the net statistical benefit of immunization if his child had been one of the rare fatalities therefrom. On this program, Prager also observed that absurdity can provide amusement, his own absurdity being highly entertaining to this writer. Also, it is conservatives who warn that the more small cars are sold, the more people will die. As long as they themselves are not killed, they should worry no more about this than about other bullets they are satisfied to have personally dodged, such as decreased IQ due to a lack of breastfeeding. Prager personally survived the Holocaust, yet somehow finds an excuse for thinking it atrocious.

In a piece published in the *Los Angeles Times*, 5/29/08, Crispin Sartwell writes, "Academic consensus is a particularly irritating variety of groupthink." He also writes of the "idea that . . . no one could disagree with, say, Obama-ism, without being an idiot. This attitude is continually expressed, for example, in attacks on presidents Ronald Reagan or George W.

Bush, not for their political positions but for their grades and IQs.” The former are more subjective, while the latter are more objective standards. By what standard are idiots to be identified if not disagreement with the proposition that 2 is less than 3? Sartwell also writes that “the claims of the professoriate to intellectual independence and academic freedom . . . are thrown into question by the unanimity.” It is hard not to have unanimity regarding arithmetic, to which most propositions are reducible in the hard, objective sciences, which are composed of far fewer factions than the myriad religions of the world.

In response to Sartwell, Fred White, in a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 6/2/08, writes, “I tell my students that Max Weber was right when he said that the best professor is the one who forces his students to question their most deeply held beliefs. In our time, those beliefs are overwhelmingly liberal, relativistic and PC. This means that American colleges and universities are mainly in the business of strengthening unexamined prejudices. Colleges and universities in America have once again become enforcers of orthodoxy.” Students should question in order to assure themselves of the correct answer. It is relativism that opposes prejudice, while conservatism and orthodoxy are nearly synonymous. White demands questioning but regrets orthodoxy *per se*, even when it is the orthodoxy of iconoclasm.

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 6/2/08, Carmen says, “Harvard Biologist George Wald said: ‘Civilization will end within 15 or 30 years unless immediate action is taken against problems facing mankind.’” Winslow replies, “Told you so, Carmen.” Carmen then says, “He said it in 1970.” “He was ahead of his time,” says Winslow. No controversy arises because nowhere is it claimed that said action was not taken. Ronald Reagan would have died in 1981 had he not been treated for a gunshot wound, which he was. The cartoon must nevertheless be taken as an appeal for apathetic lethargy, though if this reasoning is supposed to represent logic, perhaps the predicted end of civilization has indeed occurred, even if not by Carmen’s meager standards.

In the same cartoon the following day, “Carmen says, “Kenneth Watt said at Swarthmore College April 19, 1970: The world will be ‘. . . eleven degrees colder in the year 2000. This is about twice what it would take to put us into an ice age.’” Winslow then asks, “What’s your point Carmen?” She then says, “What makes climate theory more accurate now than it was then?” Winslow says, “The internet?” She responds, “Right, ’cause everything on the internet is true. I forgot.” The very nature of science itself is what makes any science better than it was 38 earlier and any individual person smarter than they were 38 earlier: Learning happens, except among an unfortunate few. No mention is made of any consensus on the climate prediction, allowing the specific example given to be no more than irresponsible synecdoche. Things on the internet are not true *because* they are on the internet, but then the same holds for the Bible. If Carmen is a person of faith, then let her have faith in the internet. The merit of the internet is relevant only to confidence, not to faith.

In the same cartoon 6/4/08, Carmen says, “‘It is already too late to avoid mass starvation.’ That was Earth Day organizer Denis Hayes. Spring 1970!” When Winslow says, “I’m hungry,” Carmen says, “There’s plenty of crow to eat in the fridge.” Carmen must have a very extravagant definition in mind for the word *mass*, given the number of people who actually starved to death in the intervening years. Perhaps the legends of them who were people of color do not count in her eyes. There is no more crow to be eaten in this case than there is by Christianity, given that Dr. Howard C. Estep predicted that Jesus return at the end of the 20th century, Jerry Fallwell bet that he would never need a coffin because he was assuming that he would survive to see Jesus return, a bet that he lost.

Finally, on 6/5/08, Winslow asks, “What’s your point with quoting scientists from the ’70s espousing global cooling, Carmen?” She replies, “Throughout the ages, shamans and scientists alike have ranted about the coming armageddon.” Winslow says, “One of ’em will be right one day!” Carmen says, “I suspect we’ll know it when we see it.” It is not clear whether Winslow is speaking of scientific advocacy for an explanation of cooling or for the phenomenon itself. Scientists, unlike shamans, show their work and state their level of confidence mathematically. This makes scientist the ones who behave properly in terms of their predictions about the future, regardless of what eventually occurs. Had she clue about such behavior, Carmen would “see it” and “know it” right now.

On his television program, 6/27/08, Sean Hannity said, and not for the first time, that following the attack on Pearl Harbor in December, 1941, the United States participated in World War II for the next four and a half years. This length of time carries into 1946, well past even V-J Day. If counting from the start of the war in September of 1939, this period would not even extend to D-Day. Had he said it on only one occasion, it could simply be a matter of him misspeaking. For example, on the same program, Dennis Prager trivially observed that oil is sooner produced from oil wells than from solar panels, when he clearly meant energy rather than oil. Sufficient time had elapsed for conservatives to recognize Hannity’s arithmetic error, to correct him, and for him to make the correction. As this did not happen, either no one recognized the error, no one notified him or he would not believe the arithmetic truth when confronting it.

It is reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, 8/13/08, “The University of California did not violate students’ freedom of expression and religion when it rejected some classes at a Riverside-area Christian school from counting toward UC admission, a Los Angeles federal judge has ruled.” Amusingly, conservatives occasionally need reminding of their own opposition to social promotion, affirmative action and multiculturalism. In the article, Robert Tyler is quoted as saying, “This case is about the future of private religious education,” which the University of California does not provide, “and the right to be able to have your kids learn from a religious perspective,” which they remain free to do, there being myriad alternatives to the University of California. Anyone who believes that private religious education is to be found at said university is clearly not smart enough to be admitted there.

On his television program 8/22/08, Sean Hannity said that liberals impugn financial success. Conservatives regularly impugn intellectual success, as when Rush Limbaugh said of Nobel laureates, “Who cares what they think?”

On his radio program, 9/12/08, Michael Medved played an excerpt from *The View* in which John McCain declared a desire for judges who interpret the constitution as the founding father envisioned it. When Whoopi Goldberg asked if she should worry about a return to slavery, McCain said that he understood and that it was “an excellent point.” Medved asked why no one jumped in to inform Goldberg that slavery was ended by constitutional amendment rather than by a court decision. Perhaps because, like this writer, people interpreted the remark as referring to a return to the original, unamended constitution. Even if this is not applicable, impartiality demands that Medved condemn McCain for considering Goldberg’s point “excellent,” but this writer heard no such condemnation. On the same program, Stephen Baldwin spoke of walking out of a film because of profanity, as if he had been unaware going in that profanity would offend him, or as if the MPAA rating of the film had been a secret. According to the conservative doctrine of personal responsibility, Baldwin was responsible for knowing the film’s rating, the reasons for it, and his own sensitivities (Galatians 6:5).

On his radio program, 9/30/08, Michael Medved opined that Keith Olbermann might be insincere, and then excused the insincerity of conservatives, saying that if conservative radio personae were simply a ruse for chasing money, “What’s wrong with that?” Medved also said that Chris Matthews could not be objective because he is a Democrat, an accusation unusable against this writer, who is registered nonpartisan.

On his radio program 10/2/08, Michael Medved said that the neighborhood in which Joe Biden grew up “was not working-class because he wasn’t.” This only disqualifies his family, not the entire neighborhood. This writer is acquainted with an irredeemably “working-class” neighborhood in the middle of which sits a MacMansion. After declaring that Abraham Lincoln was both exceptional and a common man, Medved said that there is nothing average about one who is both average and exceptional. A man is not average unless *something* is average about him. Medved asked if terrorists should be understood or defeated, which is falsely dichotomous. This writer desires both.

When, in October 2008, a Republican women’s club’s newsletter graphically associated Barack Obama with racially stereotypical foods, the perpetrator, Diane Fedele, and her immediate family claimed not to know that fried chicken and watermelon were racist stereotypes, and asked a reporter, “Who says it’s racist?” Racists themselves have for decades, as have all people sufficiently perceptive to be aware of racists. Perhaps the Fedele’s stupidity is feigned, but it is sad when stupidity is considered one’s least dishonorable option. In any case, it constitutes yet another cultural victory for this writer, on whose dust the Fedeles are free to gag.

In the 2008 presidential campaign, John McCain spoke derisively of funding research on bear DNA but offered no description of the research that would allow for judgment of its potential merit. Penicillin was discovered as the product of mold, which must be at least as silly a life form as a bear. McCain must *a fortiori* regret the development of antibiotics, and therefore perhaps does not deserve treatment with them. Cost/benefit analysis is impossible if only the cost is given and not the potential benefit.

Commenting on this in the *Los Angeles Times*, 10/28/08, Lawrence M. Krauss writes:

“McCain’s gleeful attack sends this message: Encouraging science literacy is not worthy of government support.”

“Finally, last week, Sarah Palin gave her first policy speech, urging the federal government to fully fund the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. Along the way, she too attacked science earmarks by claiming that the shortfall needed to fully fund the act was less money than was allocated to projects that have ‘little or nothing to do with the public good. Things like fruit fly research in Paris, France.’”

“Fruit flies can be made to seem like a silly thing to spend money on. But Palin was referring to research at a lab in France supported by the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The subject is the olive fruit fly, which threatens the California olive industry. The U.S. is working with France because that nation has dealt with an olive fruit fly infestation for decades, far longer than California.”

“Maybe Palin also should have been told that a University of North Carolina fruit fly study last year demonstrated that a protein called neurexin is required for nerve-cell connections to form and function correctly. That discovery may lead to advances in understanding, among other things, autism, one of the childhood disorders that has been stressed by the McCain-Palin campaign.”

In other words, Palin actually does support such research, but is simply not smart enough to realize it. If she would prefer the experiments to be performed on her rather than on fruit flies, then she is welcome to step forward and volunteer.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 2/27/09, professor of geology Brian Wernicke writes:

“You would think that the political outfall of Hurricane Katrina, a natural disaster that contributed richly to handing the Republican Party its head in 2006 and 2008, would have tempered some of [Louisiana Governor] Jindal’s remarks. I speak of the rhetorical flourish that we are wasting \$140 million a year on ‘something called volcano monitoring.’ . . . Is spending the tiniest fraction of the billions per year spent on weather monitoring, so vital to protecting Jindal’s own hurricane-prone state and the nation at large, a grotesque excess? Monitoring volcanoes protects millions of lives in the Pacific Northwest and Alaska from being devastated, in far greater numbers than could ever be contemplated from a hurricane, if Mt. Hood or Mt. Rainier were to erupt.”

Yet again the pot calls the sugar black.

In a similar manner, on his television program, 5/29/09, Sean Hannity declared it wasteful to spend money researching a mold that poses no threat to humans. Nonthreatening molds have nevertheless been known to save millions of lives, and similarly nonthreatening microorganisms are the basis of the beer and cheese industries.

In December, 2008, conservatives disparaged Senator Harry Reid for acknowledging the odor of sweaty humans. Should the reader ever catch a conservative mocking the supposed bathing habits of Michael Moore, it is hoped that the irony will be recognized and enjoyed.

Sometime in 2008, Megyn Kelly offered the non sequitur that wind power does not have promise as a future energy source because it is not currently popular.

Sometime in 2008, Michael Medved denied charges that the reverend Jeremiah Wright’s remarks were “taken out of context” because said decontextualization did not foster misinterpretation of his meaning. This demonstrates a lack of understanding of the phrase, and is equivalent to saying that because Ronald Reagan was shot, but nonfatally, he was therefore not shot.

In the cartoon of 1/8/09, Mallard offers his “New-Year’s Prediction #17: “After tonight’s game, the best team in college football will be . . . debated about for another year, since we still can’t get a @\*#@!! playoff system.” We have one in science, and yet creationists wrongly think that there remains something to be “debated about.”

On his television show, 1/14/09, Bill O’Reilly accused the *New York Times* of sullyng America’s reputation around the world. Ironically, conservatives routinely deride liberals for caring about what other countries think of America. O’Reilly also said that soldiers should not be prosecuted for torture. If not, then, *a fortiori*, neither is the *New York Times* to be sued for liable. Sticks and stones . . . .

On his television program, 2/5/09, Sean Hannity was amused when a caller on the Hate Hannity Hotline said something to the effect of, “Calling people names doesn’t make you right, moron.” Hannity seemed to agree with the caller’s proposition, but it is hoped that he also recognizes that the proposition is right in spite of the epithet, not because of it. Otherwise, Hannity is guilty of an *argumentum ad logicam*. Alternatively, Hannity may indeed believe that calling people names *does* make him right, a belief that is wrong.

Around this same time, Hannity complained about a proposal to spend hundreds of millions of dollars for STD prevention. He then claimed to have saved Americans that expense by saying, “Don’t have sex with strangers.” It is doubtful that Hannity’s message reached as many people as would the one proposed by the government, and his was paid for by the populace by way of his sponsors. His message also fails as a remedy in cases of rape or of nonstrangers who lie. Also, as noted above, unlimited promiscuity within the proper pool of nonstrangers is as safe as any monogamous relationship established from within that pool.

On his television program, 2/11/09, Sean Hannity criticized Helen Thomas for referring to “so-called terrorists.” Many conservatives dismiss scientists as “so-called experts.” In the *Los Angeles Times*, 9/20/06, Max Boot quotes George W. Bush as follows: “‘I’m certainly not a military expert, nor am I in Baghdad,’ he said, so he will leave those decisions to the ‘experts.’” If this is proper, then let it be so with science as well.

In March, 2009, conservatives scolded President Obama first for his doom-and-gloom rhetoric regarding the economy and then for his levity on the same topic. At least if one is self-contradictory, one is more likely to stumble onto the truth, even if only by accident, though it may very well go unrecognized.

In May, 2009, Sean Hannity claimed that a comedic hope that Rush Limbaugh’s kidneys would fail constituted a death wish. If renal failure entails death, then Gary Coleman could not have been alive in the 1990s. In fact, dialysis and kidney transplants happen.

On his radio program 8/7/09, Dennis Prager, commented on someone saying of Republicans considering a judge nominated to the Supreme Court by President Obama that “they would reject Moses.” Prager thought the comment was not apt because the Democrats would be naturally more likely to reject Moses than would Republicans. That, apparently unbeknownst to Prager, is exactly the point. The situation lacks irony and thus does not constitute a joke when ideologues oppose those of the opposite ideology. A joke arises only when people counter-ideologically reject *one of their own* in opposition not to the nominee but to the nominator (“Duh!”). Perhaps Prager has never heard it said of someone that he would sell *his own* mother.

On 9/28/09, Louisiana governor Bobby Jindal said that government does not create jobs, allowing for the speculation that perhaps Jindal receives his paycheck from Burger King.

In the Summer of 2010, Sarah Palin amusingly invoked the Shakespeare Defense for her use of the neologism *refutiate*. This excuse is somewhat misapplied. When Shakespeare invented words, he did so on purpose. He also invented words that were good enough to make it into the dictionary as standard entries rather than slang. The acceptance of *refutiate* even as slang would be surprising. It is also delightful to hear those who oppose the teaching of Ebonics proudly and defiantly engaging in Hickspeak. Ultimately, in language she may understand, she is invited to “refutiate this!”

Avastin is a drug approved by the FDA for the treatment cancers of the brain, colon, kidney and lung. In July, 2010, its provisional approval for the treatment of breast cancer was threatened with revocation due to ineffectiveness, or at least the lack of sufficient effectiveness to compensate for its liver toxicity. Even without said approval, it could still be used off-label for approximately \$8,000 per month. Senator David Vitter said this was “sickening” and predicted that it would lead to the withholding of care for patients whose lives are “not deemed valuable enough.” Even if a life is valuable enough to extend, the issue is the recognition of those situations in which Avastin *does not do that*.



Dr. Mark Kieran is quoted in the *Boston Globe* as saying that “for women with breast cancer, Avastin with paclitaxel was not better than paclitaxel alone.” Thus these drugs are respectively analogous to the proverbial kind word and gun. It is folly to pay for the kind word if it is yielding one no more than is already being obtained by the gun.

A column posted on Andrew Breitbart’s “Big Government Today” website accuses the government of hiding decisions “behind language like ‘clinically meaningful’ to lead people to believe the drug doesn’t work.” This alleged subterfuge is no more than scientifically proper parlance. Tautologically, what *could* it mean for a drug not to work except that it yields no “clinically meaningful” benefit?

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 8/17/10, Henry I. Miller and Jeff Stier emphasize that the issue of cost-effectiveness lies outside the mandate of the FDA, which is concerned only with medical efficacy and safety. Conservatives seem to be saying that the FDA dare not withhold approval of any alleged drugs, *whether they work or not*. Thus are conservatives willing to pay whatever is asked of them for placebos (or the Brooklyn Bridge). And beyond what they are willing to pay personally, they seem to be saying that under socialized medicine, such futile expenditures should add to the general tax burden. Conservatives have a reputation for deploring waste, yet here they are demanding it.

Glenn Beck opined that the FDA decision is consistent with putting America on the road to Obamacare death panels. The concept of a death panel is interesting only to the extent that it would cause death sooner than would otherwise occur, which has not been demonstrated in this case. The conservative alternative would seem to be waste panels, which would consider it “sickening” if drug companies were paid less than \$8,000 per month for placebos (and would probably be composed of the same people who complained about \$600 toilet seats on military aircraft). If Beck’s wife were to be decapitated in a car accident with Obamacare in effect, perhaps he might insist that Avastin be employed as smelling salts in an attempt to revive his wife’s head at the rate of \$8,000 per month. He is free to spend his own money in such an endeavor (or for the use of Avastin as floor polish or whatever), but why should tax payers have to pay for something that does his wife no good?

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It is stipulated that the conservative spokespersons cited may not themselves be stupid, the stupidity they exhibit being possibly an insincere persona intended to target stupidity in a particular audience. As documented herein, conservatives accuse liberals of cultivating unearned self-esteem among students, but then offer this same service when they foster rather than correct stupidity in their target audience. What Joe R. Hicks (*Los Angeles Times*, 7/24/05) calls “tamtrum politics” constitutes “playing to one’s base,” and it is certainly to the base, in the evaluative sense, that so many conservatives so often play. Ann Coulter wrote a book titled *If Democrats Had Any Brains, They’d Be Republicans*. It is a wonder that the members of her frequent target audience could think their way out of a paper bag, answering the question: “Whom are they trying to kid?” Fortunately, not all the people can be fooled all the time. Though this issue of targeting the down-market crowd has already been addressed in passing, additional examples will now be offered.

The cartoon of 2/12/06 reads in part, “THIS CARTOON IS PROVIDED AS A PUBLIC SERVICE BY THE FOUNDATION TO PREVENT SERIOUS INJURY TO GUYS WHO HAD NO IDEA THAT TUESDAY IS VALENTINE’S DAY.” Tinsley’s target audience has no idea about a great many things.

In the cartoon of 3/4/06, Mallard exclaims, “Gee, according to this book, Americans as a whole have a larger, not smaller, net worth than ever before!” After dozing off, he continues, “Oh. Sorry. Just waiting for the mainstream media to do a story on that.” Saying nothing about the distribution of that worth within the “whole,” the stated situation is perfectly consistent with most of that “net worth” being concentrated in the richest of the rich and more people (and a greater proportion of people) being in poverty. Mallard does not claim otherwise, and those who can, do. Thus, Mallard fails to offer grounds for why “the [liberal] mainstream media” would “do a story on that,” though he seems to think (mistakenly) that he has. Students unable to recognize this accent fallacy could advance only by social promotion, which conservatives oppose.

In the cartoon of 5/8/06, Mallard implicitly disapproves of “appealing to our . . . baser natures,” though ironically, given what his target audience is sometimes expected to accept.

In the cartoon of 7/7/06, Mallard says, “D.C. Comics is coming out with a new version of ‘Batwoman,’ in which she’s a lesbian. Their strategy is apparently either to ‘celebrate diversity’ or to increase D.C.’s market share among 13-year-old boys.” It would be surprising if any thought had ever been given to doing anything other than the latter, which is the company’s uncontroversially obvious mission. Mallard similarly violates logic and other rule systems either through simple stupidity or to increase market share by targeting conservative idiots at the expense of liberal ones, both of whom can stew in their own juice, for political ideology cannot redeem stupidity.

In the cartoon of 7/29/06, Mallard reports, “A leak to the media today revealed that the North Korean missile launch’s occurrence on the same day as the space shuttle launch was actually carefully orchestrated by NASA to make *its* engineers look better by comparison.” This may also explain why so many conservatives target the stupid members of their audience. Juxtaposition with such conservatives as Tinsley, Hannity and Coulter certainly works wonderfully for this writer!

In the cartoon of 1/20/06, Mallard says, “Here’s an e-mail from Betty, a former postal worker who objects to my cartoons that make fun of the U.S. mail. She no doubt chose to use e-mail to make sure her complaint would actually reach me.” Doubt does in fact arise from the fact that the only address usually printed in the cartoon itself is an e-mail address, making for an artificially manufactured punchline and no actual joke.

A common device for targeting fools is the invitation to compare one number. If a team scores 28 points in a football game, does it constitute a win or a loss? Many seem to think they know, in spite of the matter being indeterminate until the opponent’s score is given. For example, during the 2004 presidential campaign, one often heard, “John Kerry voted to raise taxes 350 times.” Is this more than the number of times he voted to *lower* them? (The Congressional Record has him voting to lower taxes 640 times.) Is this more than the average Republican? Republicans, tellingly, did not bother to say.

Similarly, on his television program, 2/7/07, Sean Hannity complained that transcontinental trips by Nancy Pelosi would cost \$300,000 if she went nonstop instead of stopping half way. This constitutes an accent fallacy because he never stated the cost of the alternative, expecting his audience to be stupid enough to think that one number can be compared.

On his television program 4/24/07, Lou Dobbs spoke of two cities in which crime rose after handguns were banned, claiming that crime had tripled in one such city. He neglected to mention whether or not crime concurrently rose by an even greater amount in the control group, allowing for the possibility that it had quintupled in cities without such laws. It being impossible to compare one number, any implication of the reported situation being better or worse is necessarily empty.

It was reported in the *Los Angeles Times* that in November, 2007, T. Boone Pickens offered “to pay \$1 million to anyone who can disprove allegations by veterans who disparaged [Senator John] Kerry’s Vietnam War record.” The stunt seemed intended for an audience too stupid to realize that the burden of proof rests on allegations, which stand untrue until proven true. Those of us lacking such stupidity are much amused by those who would not recognize a *fait accompli* if it bit them.

On his television program 8/26/08, Bill O’Reilly said that those who claim that Fox is a right-wing network should be shown Fox’s superior market share, thus declaring that popularity is inconsistent with conservatism. He also declared NBC to be “in the tank” for Barack Obama because it had featured more favorable than unfavorable reports on the candidate by a factor of 10, which would constitute being in the tank for John McCain had the latter’s factor been 20 or 30. Significantly, however, O’Reilly left McCain’s number unreported, thus targeting those stupid enough to believe in the possibility of comparing one number.

Similarly, Rudolph Giuliani, at the Republican National Convention, 9/3/08, noted the number of times Barack Obama voted “present” in the state legislature, while never giving the corresponding numbers for Obama’s fellow legislators nor for John McCain, allowing for the possibility of Obama’s tally being a record low. Obama himself is guilty of this form of accent fallacy, but conservatives pointing to this in futile hopes of exculpation would be guilty of a *tu quoque* fallacy.

Why would anyone with valid and sound arguments waste time supplementing them with invalid ones? People who are smart enough to know when they get it right should be smart enough to recognize when they get it wrong. Though such intelligence may not be welcome in the target audience of scoundrels, once validity and soundness are achieved, it is Miller Time. As Olivia says in *Twelfth Night* (I.v.), “If you be mad, be gone; if you have reason, be brief.” In other words, “If you got the grits, serve ’em.” For example, on his radio program, 6/19/09, Michael Medved, while speaking of a couple whose politics he opposed, remarked that they had five ex-spouses between them, and then added, “But never mind.” If the comment is irrelevant and to be ignored, then it is a waste of time to have added what is to be deleted. Alternatively, it could be that Medved was simply covering himself in spite of the impossibility of unringing a bell and of idiots ignoring irrelevant material. (The fallacy in this case is known as “poisoning the well.”) While this writer is smart enough to ignore such things, Medved has little reason to mention them unless his target audience is not.

Occasionally, the property sought in a collateral audience is incredulity. In June, 2009, in their effort to prevent the release of photos that reportedly show the abuse of people detained as suspected terrorists or enemy combatants, Senators Lindsey Graham and Joe Lieberman declared that terrorists who saw the photos would be motivated to commit vengeful acts of terror. Actually, such statements themselves constitute sufficient motivation *unless* the terrorists assume Graham is lying. It is hard to imagine a terrorist withholding judgment and waiting to see the photos for himself because Graham and Lieberman are so untrustworthy. Nevertheless, Graham and Lieberman counted on the terrorists not to believe them.

On his radio program 8/14/09, Dennis Prager said that it hurt him to say (because he has such great respect for workers) that in general, what is good for unions is bad for America. He quickly added that what is good for *workers* is good for America, and that workers should never be confused with unions. If the two are not to be confused *and* Prager knows this and so does not do it, then grounds for his pain do not exist. The wise man does nothing reluctantly. Otherwise, it is an acknowledgment that his target audience may indeed be too stupid to avoid such confusion, and it is *this* inevitability that pains Prager.

On Fox television 9/2/09, Laura Ingraham offered questions to be asked of students as examples of what she called “propagandizing,” apparently hoping that her audience would be too stupid to realize that interrogatives lack truth value. Propaganda could be exemplified by certain *answers* to the questions submitted by Ingraham, but she offered none.

Sometime later Ingraham blamed fallen hotel revenue on “the Obama economy.” Amusingly, she did so on Fox News, one of whose sponsors at the time was GoToMeeting software from Citrix. Fox aired their commercials, which bragged of allowing people to do teleconferencing without traveling and staying in hotels. Thus did Fox profit from the promotion of software that helps keep people out of hotels while simultaneously blaming Obama, all the while assuming that the audience would be too stupid to appreciate the irony.

In a television ad aired as part of her senatorial campaign in 2010, Carly Fiorina manages to disappoint civilized people three times with only nine words. In the ad, Barbara Boxer is shown saying that climate change is one of her national security concerns. Fiorina then says, “Terrorism kills, and Barbara Boxer’s worried about the weather!”

Sufficient criticism has already been directed at Fiorina’s failure to distinguish weather from climate. Her statement also means that terrorism deserves concern because it kills, while weather does not deserve concern because it does not kill. She does not say that terrorism kills more, nor that it kills more horrendously. Her standard for contradistinction is merely that it kills, which means that weather does not, or else it would fail to differ from terrorism. The idea that weather does not kill should seem strange to anyone who has noted the fact that reports about tornadoes and hurricanes are often accompanied by death tolls. Fiorina seems to be targeting people who have never seen such weather reports. In any case, whenever such death tolls are reported in the future, they need not be believed thanks to Fiorina’s assurance that such simply does not happen.

There is also the implication of worrying being done about weather *instead of* about terrorism. In Fiorina's own ad, Boxer is heard to say that climate change is merely *one* of her concerns. Sane people are able worry about weather (and climate) *and* terrorism *and* the price of bread and any number of things. Fiorina's target audience seems not to be acquainted with enough sane people to have noticed this.

In another ad, Fiorina regards Boxer as arrogant for wanting to be addressed as “Senator,” which is her proper title. In order for Fiorina not to be equally guilty, she should perhaps be addressed as “Babe.” Fiorina assures voters that she would work to end the arrogance in Washington. Applying Fiorina’s own (self-approved) formula yields: “Terrorism kills, and Carly Fiorina’s worried about arrogance!”

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A great source of amusement are conservatives living in glass houses and yet ironically throwing stones, and conservatives exemplifying the pot calling the kettle (and sometimes even the sugar) black. They magisterially fault others for a lack of humility even when their own status is no less humble (Matt 7:3, Luke 6:41).

The cartoon of 10/18/04 states, “Don’t vote if you don’t know anything.” By contrast, no corresponding standard applies to the less significant activity of drawing cartoons.

In the cartoon of 5/5/05, Mallard asks, “Professor, what, in your opinion, has spawned the current ‘memoir boom’?” The Professor responds, “For the first time in history, we realize that *everyone* is extraordinary! The self-esteem revolution, Mallard!” Mallard says, “And when ‘everyone is extraordinary, nobody is’?” The Professor says, “Hey, it’s a great time to be a mediocre tenured professor, Mallard!” Not everyone is extraordinary, but virtually everyone has something to teach. It is always a great time to be any caliber professor rather than the vast majority constituting the unwashed masses who do not deserve to be any sort of professor at all. Again, if those who can, do, and those who cannot, teach, then those who cannot even teach can always draw cartoons. (In the cartoon *La Cucaracha* by Lalo Alcaraz of 8/25/06, the sign displayed on Pioneer Elementary reads, “Flunk gym? You can still be a comic strip artist!”)

In the cartoon of 5/7/05, a character says, “I counsel the ‘memoir-averse community,’ people who think that just because they’re boring, or can’t write a standard English sentence they shouldn’t publish their memoirs!” By excluding himself from the cartoon-averse community, Tinsley proclaims himself interesting, yet he finds grounds for disparaging others who do similar things. Perhaps this is self-proclaimed hubris. Many fascinating lives have been lived outside the English-speaking world, including many lived prior to the invention of the language.

In the cartoon of 7/2/05, Mallard reports, “Um . . . Some celebrities are marrying some other celebrities, and then getting divorced. Tom Cruise is on T.V. a lot and this is all vapid drivel that doesn’t affect any of our lives.” It certainly affects Bruce Tinsley’s life, as he chose to write the preceding commentary in order to earn his living. Whether or not his cartoon has any greater significance for our lives, he sees fit to publish it.

In the cartoon of 7/9/05, characters solicit sponsorship for skateboarding, walking and bowling “for a good cause.” Mallard then says, “How come nobody ever says, ‘Will you sponsor me to pick up trash, mow yards, or clean your bathroom for a good cause?’” However good Tinsley’s cause is, he is sponsored merely to draw cartoons and whine.

In the cartoon of 7/16/05, Mallard reports, “This just in: An actual researcher, at an actual university,\* has discovered that when we eat more *we get fatter!!* Meanwhile, actual journalists have apparently decided that this is *news*.” Just imagine how much less is to be expected from an actual cartoonist. Also, Mallard’s asterisk “actually” and erroneously directs one not to the expected citation of an “actual researcher” and an “actual university” in some actual scholarly journal, but to another report of this story in *USA Today* (the “journalists”).

In the cartoon of 7/27/05, Mallard reports that “the index of how good rock stars feel about themselves by being charitable with other people’s money is up sharply.” It is unclear how this differs from the index of how good cartoonists feel about themselves by being charitable with their opinions. Those “other people” were equally charitable when they voluntarily donated that money, after which it ceases to be theirs and is wrongly called “other people’s,” as it seems to be in the cartoon of 2/24/05.

In the cartoon of 8/9/05, titled “Liberals, The Early Years,” a person reacts to an emergency by saying, “Quick! Somebody get me a quicksand-awareness ribbon!” Indeed, when the situation is urgent, a liberal ribbon appears to be no substitute for a conservative cartoon.

In the cartoon of 10/3/05, Mallard reports, “This just in: ‘Irony,’ which was rumored to be ‘dead’ after 9-11, seems to be making a comeback. Exhibit ‘A’? The spectacle of Senator Kennedy actually sitting in judgment of another human being.” Tinsley’s work shows that irony is never far away. Kennedy’s position is at least the result of democracy, whereas cartoonists sit in judgment without being elected.

In the cartoon of 12/19/05, Mallard suggests a flat tax as “a boon to all us working slobs” that would also cause “all those I.R.S. folks . . . to get real jobs,” perhaps as cartoonists.

In the cartoon of 1/8/06, Mallard predicts, “George Clooney will win the prestigious ‘George Clooney Award,’ given annually to the person who thinks George Clooney is the smartest, most sensitive, politically perspicacious person in the universe.” Is Mallard any more worthy?

In the cartoon of 1/25/06, Tinsley writes of “the illusion that the U.N. is still relevant,” as presumably opposed to the unarguable relevance of cartoonists.

In the cartoon of 1/30/06, Mallard says that “every living American has now written, or is considering writing, a children’s book.” Similarly, it is by no means clear that only the competent produce cartoons.

The cartoon of 1/19/[year uncertain] implies that law school is for those lacking any practical aptitude. Since when did the intellectual rigors of law school fail to match those of learning to draw cartoons?

In the cartoon of 1/31/06, Mallard says, “‘Writing a children’s book’ has become the new ‘law school.’ It’s the default setting for people who know that they want to do something, but just aren’t sure what.” A character then says, “I’m not just a wino. I’m a wino who’s seriously considering writing a children’s book.” Writing an adult’s cartoon would seem to be only a slightly higher aspiration. Also, entry requirements for cartoon school are clearly less stringent than for law school.

In the cartoon of 2/1/06, Mallard reports that Ted Kennedy has written a children’s book. An adult’s cartoon apparently functions perfectly well as a sort of glass house for those who wish to throw stones.

In the cartoon of 3/20/06, Mallard approves of someone who “figures that taxpayers are more important than politics.” The benefits of politics should not have to be bought via an *argumentum ad crumenam*, as all men are considered to have been created equal, even cartoonists.

In the cartoon of 3/26/06, after five characters describe their cell phone ring tones, Mallard says, “I don’t have a cell phone, but if I did, it would play ‘If I wanted to hear your music, I’d buy the C.D.,’ by Mallard Fillmore.” Tinsley sees fit to publish his commentary, though people who do not care to read it need not. It does, however, frequently provide this writer with many opportunities to enjoy the perquisite thrill of victory.

In the cartoon of 4/1/06, titled “Superfuity, The Early Years,” a caveman says, “I’m a hunter, she’s a gatherer, and Dak, here is a consultant.” How much less superfluous than a consultant is a cartoonist?

In the cartoon of 4/14/06, Mallard says, “The most recent data show that, if you lined up all of the government bureaucrats in the U.S. end-to-end, they would stretch, yawn, and go back to their naps,” as opposed to doing something productive and significant like drawing cartoons.

In the cartoon of 8/16/06, Mallard reports, “And as if the Middle East, gas prices, and China’s military buildup weren’t enough, it now appears that the ‘singer-songwriter’ tradition may be experiencing a revival.” A woman then sings “I just bought this guitar; Guess that means

I can sing, too. And *also* write songs, like this one I'm singing to yoooouuuu." Mallard is similarly presumptuous when he guesses that drawing a cartoon means that one can also succeed at English and logic. Further, a cartoonist is not even required to write music.

In the cartoon of 8/27/06, it is claimed that Emmy Award "nominees are picked by a capricious cadre of cultural oligarchs, drunk on their own power!" Let Tinsley practice what he preaches and be a model of restraint and humility with respect to his own status if he honestly considers himself, like Mallard, a "working slob."

In the cartoon of 11/20/06, Mallard is watching television as a voice on it says, "How many U.S. soldiers does it take to screw in a light bulb? What's the difference between a U.S. marine and a bowling ball?" Mallard then remarks, "I'm not sure letting John Kerry host 'Saturday Night Live' was a great idea." Kerry then says, "Two dumb sailors walk into a bar . . ." At about this time, the military was in fact lowering recruitment standards, making the phrase "dumb sailor" far from oxymoronic, however disrespectful it may be. It could also be said that those who can, do, while those who cannot, are left to draw cartoons.

In the cartoon of 1/4/07, Mallard makes the following New-Years's resolution attribution: "Folks with Ph.D.s in 'education': 'I resolve to use my degree to get grants, and mull arcane facts to prepare students throughout the nation to spend their lives flipping "Big Macs,"" or perhaps drawing cartoons.

In the cartoon of 1/6/07, Mallard offers a New-Year's resolution for the N.E.A., which reads, "We resolve to resist being tested, to hold forth against 'merit pay.' Who are you to evaluate us? Pay your taxes and go away." It is equally absurd not to evaluate cartoonists. If there is little need to test them, it is because of their lack of importance, especially relative to teachers, whom even Mallard believes should be tested.

The cartoon of 2/28/07 reads, "How to tell when the end is near. Regular people: 'I'm being transferred to our office in Guam.' 'Celebrities': 'My agent just booked me on a 'reality show.'" Then there are those relegated to drawing cartoons.

In the cartoon of 3/1/07, Mallard thinks, "Apparently, as they retire, baby boomers enjoy reading lots of new books by, for and about baby boomers! They may be self-absorbed, but at least they've been consistently self-absorbed," though no more so than Bruce Tinsley, who believes his opinions so interesting that they deserve to be enshrined in a daily cartoon.

In the cartoon of 3/3/07, Mallard says, "I think it's great that you've written a book. But don't you think that all of these new books *by, for and about* the 'sixties generation' just *affirm* the perception that you're all completely *self-absorbed*?" Unless he has a gun to his head, Tinsley seems to judge his own opinions to be worthy of daily publication, demonstrating him to be no less "self-absorbed." Also, "Know thyself" remains perfectly good advice.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 7/22/07, Edward Champion writes, "In 1994, essayist and novelist William H. Gass complained of rampant personal writing in an age of narcissism, condemning the autobiographer for 'think[ing] of himself as having led a life so important it needs celebration, and of himself as sufficiently skilled at rendering as to render it rightly.'" To the extent that much can be made of small virtues, it must be acknowledged that Tinsley at least knows that *data* is plural.

On his radio program 6/27/08, Michael Medved asked, "Who is Barack Obama to decide the world is not as it should be?" Who is Medved to decide that it is not, or that 2+2=4? Who were the abolitionists to decide slavery was wrong? *Who* is an illegitimate interrogative in this context given that it can only act as part of a fallacious *argumentum ad hominem*. Alternatively, to the extent that Medved wrongly believes that the *argumentum ad hominem* is *not* fallacious,

this question of *who* may not only be legitimately asked of *him*, but also answered to his detriment.

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Conservatives accuse liberals of not trusting the public. The practical issue is not trust, but freedom. People remain free to make their own choices. However, trust is earned by not failing, failure being a measure of the degree to which trust is not deserved. With respect to choosing *correctly*, the untrustworthiness of the public is often statistically demonstrable. The conservative view of the degree to which the public is competent and thus deserves to be trusted will now be considered.

The cartoon of 1/9/05 features Mallard's New-Year's prediction: "American students will once again stink in international academic competitions," though Mallard will insist that they are nevertheless trustworthy. To a certain extent, this is also the pot calling the kettle black.

In the cartoon of 1/13/05, Mallard thinks, "To be consistent, anybody interested in removing 'religion' from state-run institutions needs to check out the public school on 'Earth Day.'" "To be consistent," Mallard has much cleaning up to do, whether or not this is an implicit acknowledgment of the value of consistency. As documented herein, Tinsley's comic strip is often a clinic on the besetting sin of conservative inconsistency. The purely secular phenomena to which he refers may mirror religion in being equally irrational forms of thinking. Otherwise, any humor in his statement must rely on a spurious definition of religion.

In the cartoon of 1/27/05, it is suggested that people should not only be free to invest their own money, but can be trusted to. Such a notion is falsified by the existence of profitable casinos.

In the cartoon of 2/24/05, it is said, "George Bush's plan is scary! He just doesn't understand that you're too dumb to know how to save your own retirement money! This ad has been brought to you by the party of the people." People have the right and responsibility to save their own money, even when they are demonstrably stupid. With respect to social security (the focus of "Bush's plan"), their retirement money has yet to be earned by those of the younger generation who will pay it to them. What Tinsley refers to as "your" money goes to someone else, and does so now. It is a pity that conservatives could not trust the public enough to allow Ibrahim Ferrer to attend the Grammy Awards. If Tinsley did not believe that people were "too dumb," then he would not spend so much time denigrating their intelligence.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 4/29/05, David Gelernter defines Democratic philosophy as, "We'll take care of you. Leave the thinking to us." People should be allowed to do their own thinking, but do not necessarily deserve to be taken care of when they fail. Besides, leaving conservatives like Tinsley to do their own thinking often affords great amusement.

Gelernter says that Democrats regard America as "a nation of intellectually limited youngsters." So do some conservatives, as this parallels Mallard Fillmore's repeated assessment, which he even concedes is objectively demonstrable by low test scores. Even if people are not stupid, they justly deserve to be treated as if they were when they pretend to be. Gelernter speaks of "the Infantile American Principle, so dear to Democratic hearts." This writer regrets infanthood but is powerless to deny the facts.

Gelernter asks, "How could anyone be opposed *in principle* to private investment accounts within Social Security? . . . How on Earth could anyone be opposed in principle to letting taxpayers manage a minuscule fraction of their own money (their own money, dammit!) if they want to?" It is because it is oxymoronic. Everyone already has absolute, total control of



their own money and can spend it all on gum and beer if they desire. To the extent that they cannot, the money is not theirs.

Gelernter accuses Democrats of “lying” after himself erroneously claiming that money paid into Social Security is that of the payer, when, in fact, the system is pay-as-you-go. Money paid into the system is given to someone else. The money to be paid to beneficiaries in the future is to be supplied in the future by others.

In the cartoon of 5/1/05, a parrot says, “Run for your lives!! Evil fast-food giants are forcing you to overeat! You have no common sense! Which is also why you can’t be trusted with your own retirement money!” If people can be trusted to avoid obesity, then they are not obese. That people cannot be so trusted is demonstrated by their obesity. What Tinsley means to say is that the obese are *responsible* for their obesity (Galatians 6:4-5), not that their obesity is fictitious, which it is not.

In the cartoon of 5/14/05, Mallard cites “professors at UCLA and the University of Chicago,” opportunistically respecting academia when not blaming it for “our national ignorance problem,” as he will 9/24/06.

In Scott Adams’s *Dilbert* cartoon of 5/19/05, the boss blames his misbehavior on irresponsible bartenders. Science is not responsible for ignorance. Rather, according to conservative doctrine, it is the responsibility of people who choose not to be educated to recognize and acknowledge their failure and accept the just consequences.

On 7/3/05, after citing examples of the ignorance of “actual American students,” Mallard writes, “Memo to all graduation speakers: Please stop saying, ‘You are the future’; You’re scarin’ the heck out of me.” Equally scary is the stupidity of anyone who regards the cartoon 6/26/05 (among many others) as constituting a complete, valid argument. Tinsley often derides “elites” who claim to know more than others, but here, he himself seems to claim exactly that about himself. And yet, as stupidity is so often necessary in his target audience, ignorant American students may very well represent the future of his career. In the cartoon of 6/25/05, someone is derided for asking of “the public,” “What do they know?” If Tinsley is trying to make a generational argument, then he must exclude students when referring to “the public.” Tinsley derides liberals for noting red-state stupidity, yet reserves the right to recognize it in the young, who have a far more plausible excuse than red-state adults. The right of disappointment is not unilaterally his. If American students are fair game, then so is he.

In the cartoon of 7/15/05, Mallard reports, “In the wake of the Supreme Court’s decision allowing governments to *force* you to sell your home or business for private ‘economic development,’ we’ve been assured that such ‘takings’ will only happen when it would ‘benefit the public.’ And heck, if you can’t trust big-city politicians and land developers, who can you trust?” Trust is to be earned, but this is not accomplished by failing to use the word *whom* when appropriate.

In the cartoon of 8/3/05, Mallard notes that “sixty-three percent of American adults can’t name even one supreme-court justice.”

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 8/5/05, David Galernter asks, “Can we trust the American public to forbid the creation of disposable human life? Can we trust ourselves to forbid the premeditated destruction of weak and helpless potential human beings? No . . . . Can this same public be trusted to tell the biomedical establishment ‘this far and no further’? Of course not.”

In the cartoon of 8/31/05, Mallard reports, “According to a new survey, half of Americans can’t name the three branches of government.”

In the cartoon of 9/9/05 (already cited above), Mallard reports, “A new report by ACT Inc. shows that hundreds of thousands of this year’s incoming college freshmen aren’t academically prepared to do college-level work. On the bright side, there are plenty of colleges out there that don’t require students to do college-level work.” Thus does Mallard bemoan the state of the people’s education. As to the demands placed on cartoonists, the situation seems all the brighter.

In the cartoon of 9/18/05, a character says, “Hi. I’m Jake. I’m a junior in high school. I can barely do simple math. I think George Washington fought in the Civil War in 1942, and that Hermann Melville is a type of cheese. I think ‘Homer’ is Bart’s dad and that the three branches of government are diversity, tolerance, and . . . um . . . diversity. Some people are worried that my textbooks might mention ‘intelligent design’ along with ‘evolution,’ which might be of greater concern if I could *read* my textbooks.”

In the cartoon of 10/17/05, Mallard reports, “Anna Nicole Smith’s case will be heard by the Supreme Court, nine of the most important people in the nation. Sadly, *she’ll* be the one in the room whom most Americans can identify.”

In the cartoon of 12/8/05, Mallard asks a youth, “So, can you tell us *why* you’d want to wear a t-shirt with a homicidal, totalitarian loser like Che Guevara on it?” The youth answer, “Uh . . . to protest!” Mallard follows with, “To ‘protest’ what, exactly?” The youth says, “To protest that fact that I got such a poor education that I think Che Guevara was a great guy!” Tinsley acknowledges the ubiquity of poor education in history and politics. It is hoped that he may recognize it in science.

In the cartoon of 12/18/05, Mallard discovers that the only thing that “college students” are “learning these days” is “diversity.”

In the cartoon of 12/21/05, Mallard wishes he “could give to our children . . . something that they haven’t had for several generation,” which turns out to be “an education.” An education for Mallard himself should also be desired. Education may be lacking generally, according to Mallard, but such a thing is difficult to achieve in the absence of demand. Many are just afraid of what they might learn, making it, ultimately, less a scientific or sociological issue than a psychiatric one.

In the cartoon of 1/9/06, George Clooney offers “Hollywood lefties’ New-Years resolution” as follows: “We don’t know a lot about politics. For us, it’s just kind of a game. We resolve to keep praising ‘diversity,’ though most of us all think the same!!” Ignorance, as of biology, seldom troubles conservatives. People *should* “all think the same” when it is a matter of right and wrong.

In the cartoon of 2/4/06, Mallard thinks, “I’m thinkin’ maybe we’d all be better off if there were fewer people writing ‘children’s books’ and more people reading children books.” Also good would be fewer people reading (and drawing) cartoons and more people reading science books for their own benefit as well as to children.

In the cartoon of 3/10/06, the “geography knowledge of average American public-high-school student” is derided. God forbid students (or cartoonists) should know how cladograms or syllogisms work.

In the cartoon of 5/7/06, a child complains, “Every minute of my time is *scheduled!* But still, I dream. I’ve heard legends of how kids used to spend their summers . . . ‘pick-up’ basketball games, riding bikes nowhere in particular, fishing with cane poles and just fooling around in the back yard. It sounds so . . . fun. Like being a *kid!*” Then, 5/25/06, Mallard reports, “This just in: There are unconfirmed reports that a U.S.-born caucasian high-school student has

decided to major in math and science in college!” Perhaps the rest spent too much time realizing Mallard’s implied ideal of “just fooling around” and being *kids*. Given adequate quantities of mathematicians and scientists, their nationalities and skin colors should not matter, just as the NBA functions perfectly well with disproportionately few white players. Tinsley himself may demonstrate the need for more U.S.-born cartoonists (or conservatives) to major in grammar and logic. Another alternative view of “just fooling around in the back yard” is presented in Bill Watterson’s *Calvin & Hobbes* cartoon of 12/2/05, where Calvin says, “These days are precious, and I’d rather spend them goofing around than studying.” Hobbes replies, “I never really thought of ignorance as a quality of life issue.” Tinsley is welcome to it.

In the cartoon of 5/9/06, Mallard says, “I’ll be so embarrassed if aliens ever *do* visit earth, and it’s during ‘sweeps weeks.’”

In the cartoon of 9/22/06, Mallard reports, “In the latest obesity study, Mississippi is the fattest state, Colorado is the thinnest, and American schoolchildren are the least likely to be able to find either one on a map.” Their uncritical acceptance of creationism would impede their progress still further.

In the cartoon of 9/24/06, Mallard reports, “Good news and bad news: While only 24 percent of Americans surveyed can name even two Supreme Court justices, 77 percent can name two of the Seven Dwarfs! And, while only 42 percent can name the three branches of government, 74 percent can name all of the original Three Stooges! And, more of those surveyed gave their education level as ‘college graduate’ than any other level! Of course, I’m confident that our national ignorance problem will be addressed by parents, schools, or whatever country conquers our lazy rear-ends later this century.” There need only have been four alternatives in order for college graduates to account for all those who could name two Supreme Court justices, which might acquit “schools” at that level, given that Mallard allows for the possibility that 99 percent of those who could name two Supreme Court justices could also name them all. Many in this country would be satisfied to be able to name all the books of the Bible and remain ignorant of science and logic. Relative to this writer, Mallard is as much a part of “our national ignorance problem” as he is of the solution.

The *Prickly City* cartoon of 10/14/06 asserts general popular stupidity.

In the cartoon of 11/2/06, Mallard says, “Now that even the mainstream media acknowledge that ‘college is the new high school,’ you gotta wonder how long the higher-education establishment can keep calling itself ‘progressive.’” If “the higher-education establishment” is not to lower its standards, then Mallard is to forgive criticism of his errors. Mallard does not unequivocally trust students to be smart, yet insists on trusting them to invest their money.

In the cartoon of 11/3/06, Mallard says, “I strongly disagree with *USA TODAY*’s assertion that ‘college is the new high school.’ Heck, with grade inflation, ‘remedial’ classes, and ‘dumbing-down’ curricula, college is the new *grade school*.” If conservatives disapprove of “‘dumbing-down’ curricula,” then let them celebrate the rejection of creationism. And let not Mallard take offense when his own grade goes uninflated. If losers are to lose, then let them lose. Also, even if college is the new grade school, it would still seem to have more stringent standards than cartooning.

In the cartoon of 2/23/08, Mallard reports, “In a new survey, 25 percent of Britons think Winston Churchill never actually existed, but that Eleanor Rigby and Robin Hood were real. Those under 20 were the most ignorant of history, giving the American education establishment renewed hope that, if we just wait long enough, the rest of the industrialized world will sink to

our level.” With respect to science, conservatives do their best to lower our level faster than others can sink to it. Given that Tinsley ridicules liberals for not trusting the public with their own safety and money, let him trust them to learn history. Stringency with respect to people’s knowledge of history licenses stringency with respect to people’s knowledge of science.

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As already demonstrated by certain examples above, conservatives ridicule opposition to profiling, but resent when they themselves are thus targeted. If statistically based prejudicial suspicion is valid, then let it be applied impartially to everyone, including conservatives.

In the cartoon of 12/6/04, Mallard condemns “stereotyping ‘red state’ Americans as cavemen with low I.Q.s.” It is further said, “For a bunch of people who say they ‘celebrate diversity and tolerance,’ these liberals do a darn good bigot impression.” Such stereotyping is wrong, but is in no way inconsistent with tolerance. For a bunch of people who are not known for celebrating diversity, conservatives nevertheless tolerate inferiority, especially the explanatory inferiority of creationism. (Tinsley routinely refers simply to “liberals.” If this writer uses the blanket term “conservative,” no *tu quoque* justification is being attempted. However, whatever condemnation is consequently deserved, Tinsley deserves no less.) Intellectual diversity certainly exists, yielding a broad I.Q. spectrum, and the only reasonable alternative to multiculturalism and diversity worship it to have losers walk, for tolerance should not degenerate into radical egalitarianism and social promotion, which are no better than geographically based stereotyping.

The concept of tolerance is only applicable with respect to the inferior, and may arise out of economic necessity. Jerry Fallwell loved homosexuals but hated homosexuality. It is on this basis that red-state agriculture loved. Produce would be missed, even if the farmers were not. (Like Sam Spade, one may “have a few sleepless nights, but that’ll pass.”) Diversity should be preserved even if only out of sheer anthropological interest, but not at all costs. Tolerance is demonstrated by the fact that the people in question are allowed to live and to be employed. They have not been displaced in the way that they displaced the Native Americans. And when disrespected by liberals, those in the red states freely reciprocate.

The cartoon of 1/1 of an uncertain year (probably 2005), shows Peter Jennings saying, “I resolve to conceal all the smugness / and disdain that my smirk celebrates / the superior grin I can barely keep in / every time I discuss the ‘red states.’” Conservatives display similar disdain for blue states, and also go beyond geography to attack the concept of evolution unjustly. And if superiority is not to be enjoyed, then let Tinsley renounce his cartoon of 2/1/05 that espouses the celebration of athletic superiority.

The cartoon of 5/8/05 mocks the “profiling” of a killer whale as potentially dangerous. Similarly, stupidity is not to be presumed based on a person’s conservatism. It must be proved, as it often is, at least with respect to their target audience.

In the cartoon of 5/14/05, a character, apparently to Tinsley’s disapproval, refers to “right-wing, knuckle-dragging, NASCAR-watching red-stater!” even though the cartoon of 5/8/05 ridicules *opposition* to “profiling.” “Red-staters” *cannot* be less deserving of profiling than other groups, making them merely victims of impartiality. It is profiling itself that is either right or wrong. Making the choice seems too difficult for Tinsley, who subsequently could not stop himself from flip-flopping: After disapproving of the profiling of conservatives by liberals, he, on 6/25/05, ridicules liberals for dismissing the profiling of them by conservatives. A

television says, “Another new survey says that the public thinks we media-types are a bunch of smug, arrogant, liberal, condescending elitists! But heck, what do *they* know?” This is a typical rationalization of inferiority via an *argumentum ad populum*. The goal, at least to those who know English from a hole in the ground, is to belong to the elite, the alternatives being mediocrity and failure. Neither is the goal groupthink, but rightthink. And just what *do* they know? At least with respect to students, precious little, according to Tinsley, who declares (1/9/05), “American students will once again stink in international academic competitions.”

In the cartoon of 6/24/05, Mallard reports, “In local news, some Maryland police are using night-vision goggles to catch motorists who aren’t wearing seat belts. No word yet on whether they’ll be deploying helicopters to catch those of us who aren’t flossing regularly, or using wiretaps to determine whether we eat all of our veggies.” Ironically, conservatives tend to be the first to assert that people behaving properly have nothing to fear from surveillance and that the law is to be respected. Misbehavior carries its own punishment. For instance, those who fail to care for themselves do not deserve insurance. Since Mallard licenses profiling (5/8/05, 5/14/05, etc.), he forfeits the right to be offended by the recognition of his behavior as inferior to those who, for instance, *are* flossing regularly. If his hatred for paternalism means that, counterconservatively, he should not be rescued from suicide, then he offers few grounds for missing him.

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 7/24/05, a character is satirized for not “profiling” by “religion.” Therefore, anyone wanting to equate Christianity with the bombing of abortion clinics may take comfort in the support of cartoonist Scott Stantis.

In the cartoon of 9/10/05, a man says, “Even though pit bulls *do* kill way more people than any other breed, that’s no reason to single them out!” It would be absurd to avoid singling out red states for their tendency to misbehave logically.

After ridiculing liberals for dismissing profiling, Tinsley ridicules liberals for committing it. In the cartoon of 10/15/05, Mallard says, “I’m not a republican; I’m a conservative!” His liberal companion says, “Whatever. You’re all the same to me.” Mallard concludes, “Yeah, and we all look alike and know each other.” Tinsley seldom applies such sarcasm when profiling liberals.

In the cartoon of 10/21/05, Mallard says to his creator, “I’m just saying that using the new stamp-price increase as an excuse to make fun of the post office might get ’em all disgruntled, . . .” His creator replies, “Ah, you’re worried that they might ‘go postal’ on me.” Mallard says, “Exactly! And then who’d draw me? By the way, I don’t think the postal community likes that term.” The latter is an implausible concern for one who satirizes opponents to profiling.

In the cartoon of 10/28/05, Mallard’s “politically correct Halloween costume idea #4” is given as “‘Swiss grandmother terrorist.’ This will help dispel ‘profiling’ stereotypes, such as the narrow-minded idea that most terrorists are young, middle-eastern guys! Alternatives: Japanese toddler terrorist, cocker spaniel terrorist . . .” It would similarly “help dispel ‘profiling’ stereotypes” if conservatives would get themselves hired as college professors, as Tinsley considers them an endangered species (10/26/05) while rejecting complaints of “institutional discrimination” (7/14/05). Any terrorist who is subject to suspicion via profiling is a failure. This is the Iago factor expressed by Giuseppe Verdi: “A small, malevolent-looking man arouses suspicion in everybody and deceives no one.” Mallard, however, would give Timothy McVeigh a free pass. A simple countermeasure to profiling would be the use of European females such as Muriel Degauque, as reported in *Los Angeles Times*, 12/2/05. (Incidentally, conservatives, when

discussing suicide bombers, prefer the phrase “homicide bomber,” which fails to distinguish them from people such as McVeigh who intentionally survive their bombings.) The conservative response to any “young, middle-eastern guys” or Kansans who might be offended by profiling will presently be examined.

In the cartoon of 3/28/06, Mallard says, “No matter which side you were on in the Dubai port-terminal-ownership controversy, wasn’t it refreshing to see liberals doing some big-time ‘profiling’?” If conservatives approve of profiling for themselves, then impartiality entitles liberals to dismiss Kansas.

In the cartoon of 6/9/06, Mallard “presents the trite liberal stereotype of a conservative,” after offering scores of trite conservative stereotypes of liberals for years. The depicted conservative says, “Git out of the U.N.!!” The second panel, labeled “The reality,” features a child who thinks, “Get the U.N. out of my village,” as if reality were devoid of conservatives wanting out of the U.N., thus yielding a false dichotomy. By revisiting the topic of the food-for-sex scandal, Mallard is guilty of the same sort of repetition for which he criticizes liberals, with *tu quoque* never having stopped being a fallacy. He seems to continue the selective application of the “bad apple” excuse, denying it to the U.N. while the U.S. military and Catholic church get a pass. Those wanting to molest children without criticism from Mallard know which path to take. The contention seems to be that the conservative attitude depicted is justified by the scandal, even though the former antedates the latter by decades.

In the cartoon of 7/6/06, Mallard reports, “Conservative women were decidedly not welcome at the recent ‘national women’s studies conference’ in Oakland. The intrepid few who tried to sneak in were quickly discovered owing in part to the fact that they actually *looked* like women.” Since Tinsley ridicules liberals who would stereotype someone as a “right-wing, knuckle-dragging, NASCAR-watching red-stater!” (5/14/05) he forfeits the moral high ground. Looking like a woman does not guarantee thinking like a civilized one.

The cartoon of 9/11/06 reads, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to think ‘profiling’ is worse than the slaughter of innocent people.” In addition to supporting profiling, the statement is a *non sequitur*. Further, memory is irrelevant to evaluating and ranking the stated activities (*eventus stultorum magister*).

In the cartoon of 9/21/06, Mallard reports, “Paramount continues to maintain that it ended its business arrangement with Tom Cruise because of his bizarre behavior and views, while failing to explain how this makes him any different from the rest of the people in Hollywood.” Mallard at least recognizes the concept of the accent fallacy. Included among “the rest of the people in Hollywood” are conservatives such as The Rock and Mel Gibson, revealing his observation to have resulted from slothful induction. Any such sweeping judgment is no less applicable to Kansas than to Hollywood.

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Related to the issue of profiling is the fact that conservatives resent being told not to be judgmental, in spite of Matthew 7:1.

In the cartoon of 12/19/04, a woman complains that “the . . . judgmental, . . . intolerant red states are even trying to drag religion into Christmas!” Consider their efforts to drag logic and science *out* of education. Wrong occurs not by being judgmental, but by being merely subjectively so when one’s judgments are objectively incorrect. Only unsound or invalid judgments are regrettable, while the judgments of science are maximally well-founded. Such

logical judgments should be no more upsetting to conservatives than the ethical judgments that they insist on making.

In the cartoon of 11/23/04, a liberal is ridiculed for saying that “being judgmental is wrong.”

In the cartoon of 3/15/05, a character is ridiculed for being concerned about people “being stigmatized as ‘losers’” and about “hurtful value judgments!”

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 8/28/05 by Scott Stantis, from inside a snake a character says, “I’d whine, but I wouldn’t want to judge his lifestyle choices.”

In the cartoon of 5/4/06, a character says, “We had no choice but to ban all ‘patriotic clothing’ at this high school! Some people might see it as saying that America is ‘better’ than other countries! And if there’s anything we professional educators deplore, it’s ‘value judgments!’” This licenses the declaration that natural explanations are better than supernatural ones. The world would be a duller place without those who constantly and comically underperform this writer.

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 9/3/07, Carmen asks, “Can a devout secularist go more than ten seconds without insulting people of faith?” Winslow replies, “What do you think, moron?!” There exists no delay between the holding of faith and the insult to logic, and insults to reason by people of faith are common. If the pot insists on calling the sugar black, then *quid pro quo*. Insults to faith are just, fair and well-earned even when they are not retaliatory.

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 9/5/07, Carmen asks, “Why can’t secularists talk to people of faith without sinking to name-calling?” Statistically, people of faith would seem no less likely to sink in this manner when dealing with secularists. Conservatives routinely ridicule liberals for not making value judgments. Conservatives should accept such judgments when they are just, fair and accurate.

In the cartoon of 9/16/06, Mallard observes, “The B.C.S. committee is meeting today to discuss changes to college football’s championship process,” as various characters say, “Five points for every Samoan offensive lineman!” “Ten points for every running back who can read!” “Twenty points for fewest team felonies!” “Rocks, paper, scissors!” The theory evaluation process exhibited by creationists is no less arbitrary and bizarre.

On his radio program, 10/3/06, Rush Limbaugh said that liberals freely judge but “despise being judged.” Let this not be true of conservatives.

In an entry dated 2/4/09 on FoxNews.com, Glenn Beck lists his “Nine Principles to Believe In,” the fifth of which reads, “If you break the law you pay the penalty. Justice is blind and no one is above it.” To the extent that this applies to grammar, let Beck either learn to distinguish a dangling preposition from a hole in the ground or “pay the penalty.” His sixth principle reads, “I have a right to life, liberty and pursuit of happiness and not a guarantee of equal results.” Let him not hypocritically seek social promotion when he underperforms this writer. His fourth principle reads, “The family is sacred. My spouse and I are the ultimate authority.” He apparently means an authority that is ultimate only relative to the family, as it is assumed that he believes that he is answerable to the “more ultimate” authority of God (not to mention the criminal courts) should he murder his children.

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 2/17/10, Carmen expresses the essence of scientific logic when she says, “We’re not a San Francisco youth league! We keep score!” This is more than can be said of creationists, who are either too scared or too stupid to do so.

As documented above, Tinsley freely condemns what he sees as liberal folly, while frequently maintaining that offense on the part of the condemned is not to be respected, as documented below.

In the cartoon of 2/1/05, Bruce Tinsley sanctions expressions of the thrill victory when he predicts: “Forty-six players in this year’s Super Bowl will be fined for violating league rules against ‘celebrating, laughing, smiling, or in any way appearing to be having fun.’” However, he ironically and tellingly withholds such license when deriding the “Dean Scream.” This is perhaps an example of situational ethics among conservatives, who claim to disapprove of it.

In the cartoon of 3/2/05, Mallard ridicules those who fear that their speech “might offend absolutely ANY group of people ANYWHERE.” Creationists should not be singled out for offense, but neither should they be arbitrarily pardoned, as demanded by impartiality. Offended or not, losers walk.

Cartoons including that of 3/5/05 ridicule someone who does not like “labels.” This writer does not mind the eponymic labeling of idiots, even if the idiots do.

In the cartoon of 3/28/05, Mallard says, “Hey, college students! ‘F.I.R.E.’, the Foundation for Individual Rights in Education, has a new ‘Guide to Free Speech on Campus’ that shows you how to fight ‘speech codes’ and other violations of your first-amendment rights!” further dispelling any qualms about criticizing losers.

The cartoon of 3/31/05 derides a professor for not wanting to “be offensive to the cannibal community.” It is reassuring to know that Tinsley licenses offense to the idiot community. Given that his permission supports these essays, offended parties should take it up him.

In the cartoon of 5/16/05, titled “Liberals, the Early Years,” a dinosaur carries a sign that reads, “Visualize Nice Tyrannosauruses.” Nor is stupidity to be merely wished away. Idiots must be either actively corrected and improved, or ignored and abandoned. Social promotion is not the conservative way.

In the cartoon of 5/17/05, also titled “Liberals, the Early Years,” a caveman says to another, as both are being chased by a carnivore, “Oh, sure. In your narrow, Western, linear worldview, he’s trying to, quote, ‘eat us,’ but who are *we* to judge?” If this is a joke, then who are scientists, with their “narrow, Western, linear worldview,” *not* to judge regarding natural history?

In the Michael Ramirez cartoon of 5/17/05, a man carrying a copy of *Newsweek* says to a tombstone that reads “AFGHAN RIOT VICTIMS,” “Good news. We’ve retracted the story.” If one is ever asked to accept an apology from the Vatican for the Crusades, the Inquisition or its treatment of Galileo, one can rest assured that one is not obliged to accept it, *according to Michael Ramirez*.

In the cartoon of 5/18/05, One dinosaur says to another, “Wooo. A meteor *that* big could wipe out the *whole planet!*” The second one says, “Oh, no! What if it has a *disparate impact* on the raptor community?!” Why, then, should any concessions be made for any disparate impact made by science on the creationist community?

In another cartoon (5/19/05) titled “Liberals, the Early Years,” one dinosaur says to another, “But what if the Tyrannosauruses see our horns as signs of aggression?!” What then does it matter if creationists see science and logic as signs of aggression?

In the cartoon of 5/22/05, those “habitually offended” by “insensitive remarks” are ridiculed, licensing “insensitive remarks” directed toward creationists.

In the cartoon of 5/26/05, a character says to someone on the telephone, “But I gave my speech on Friday night! Why wasn’t anyone offended until Monday?” The caller says, “Delayed



indignation,' the time it takes for the habitually offended to uncover hideous insensitivity in ostensibly innocuous remarks." The character exclaims, "But three days?!" Conservatives thus specify the statute of limitations to which they themselves are logically bound. Where was their offense during the 214 years that filibuster was available to Senators voting on judicial nominees?

In the cartoon of 5/28/05, a character says, "I can't believe it. I've inadvertently made a remark that could possibly be offensive to some racial, ethnic, gender, or other community with the word 'community' after its name." Thus, according to Tinsley, no offense need be respected from the intellectually inferior community.

In the cartoon of 6/1/5, "a sincere, formal apology" to "appease the habitually offended" and the idea of "sensitivity camp" are ridiculed. If Tinsley believes that it would be wrong for this writer to apologize to him, then let no such wrong be committed. The same joke is then repeated the next day (6/2/05) and the next (6/3/05).

In the cartoon of 6/23/05, Mallard says, "Now, on the heels of the news that nearly 800 convicted sex offenders got medicaid-funded Viagra, comes an even more shocking revelation from advocates for the sex-offender community: the fact that there are such things as advocates for the sex-offender community." This should not be shocking given the numerous advocates for the logic-offender community.

In the cartoon of 8/5/05, Mallard says, "In other news, the debate over whether or not PBS's programming leans left has been rekindled, as has the debate over whether water is wet." No less ridiculous is the debate over whether creationism is explanatorily inferior.

In the cartoon of 8/8/05, titled "The Media, The Early Years," a man says, "Most importantly, we need to remember that just because there's a man-eating smilodon on the loose, not all smilodons are man-eating. In fact, I just *know* that most smilodons deplore and repudiate the actions of this rogue man-eater." Therefore, the idea that most conservatives may "deplore and repudiate the actions of" the most extreme among them is to be taken as a joke *according to Tinsley*. Does Tinsley himself deserve to escape such profiling?

In the cartoon of 9/2/05, Mallard says that he will be speaking with "Catholics offended by the term "San Diego Padres," communists offended by the term "Cincinnati Reds," and New Yorkers offended by the term "Division-leading Boston Red Sox." For what respect, then, could creationists hope from holders of a superior theory? Why are their complaints any less of a joke? Natural explanations enjoy untroubled superiority over the alternative, which, among the intelligent, is only good for entertainment (*joci causa*).

In the cartoon of 9/28/05, titled "News from the future. 2007," it is reported on television, "Spokespersons for illegal-alien groups today complained that the photos on many illegal-alien driver's licenses were very unflattering." It is equally absurd for creationists to take offense at the impartial judgment of arithmetic.

The cartoon of 9/30/05 is titled "News from the future. 2011." In it, it is reported, "The California legislature finally passed the 'Free Lexuses for Illegal Aliens' bill today, rejecting the more modest 'Free Fords for Illegal Aliens' bill on the grounds that it was 'patently racist.'" The idea that discrimination against creationism is similarly unfair is similarly absurd.

In the cartoon of 10/22/05, Mallard says, "Due to our concern over offending members of the postal community and our desire not to appear 'mean-spirited,' we've decided not to use the coming stamp-price increase as an occasion to make fun of the United States Postal Service. Besides, I don't want them doing to me what they already do to my packages," not to mention what Tinsley often does to logic.

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 11/16/05, Winslow the coyote says, “The depiction of a howling coyote is demeaning and offensive!” In the cartoon of the previous day, Winslow says, “They offended me with their stereotypes of us coyotes!” Carmen says, “So you’re going to sue?” Winslow replies, “It’s the American way.” Carmen comments, “This is so wrong on so many levels.” Winslow finally observes, “If we don’t litigate, the terrorists win!!” In short, the conservative formula is for the offended to lump it.

In the cartoon of 11/18/05, Mallard says, “I can’t believe it. Apparently, I’m addicted to watching ‘Veronica Mars.’ On the bright side, with the regulations as liberal as they are, ‘television addiction’ is probably officially recognized as a *disability* under the A.D.A.” Complaints about the persecution of creationists deserve no less sarcasm.

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 12/5/05, Carmen yells, “Merry Christmas!” at a building labeled “ACLU,” from which then issues an unfavorable reaction. She then says, “It really is the happiest time of the year!” Let not creationists be any sillier in their reaction to “Happy Darwin’s Birthday!”

The *Prickly City* cartoon of 12/6/05 ridicules the idea of offending atheists, while that of 12/24/05 anonymously states, “Peace on earth, goodwill toward men.” Winslow then says, “Of course, we mean that in a totally secular, sexually neutral way.” Carmen then adds, “No, we don’t!” In other words, women can lump it. And since “Earth” is a tautologically secular reference, only the source of the message could be otherwise, not Winslow’s “we.”

In the cartoon of 2/8/06, the “habitually offended community” is ridiculed. Tinsley underscores the point by giving a ridiculed character the surname Whiney. The cartoons of 2/10/06 and 2/11/06 involve the same topic.

In the cartoon of 3/1/06, Mallard reports, “Twice in the past month, Christian T.V. viewers have gotten N.B.C. to change programming offensive to them by using letter-writing campaigns. Note to Islamic extremists: This approach is far more effective than bombing N.B.C.’s offices or beheading Jay Leno.” As previously noted, Tinsley has ridiculed “concern over offending members of the postal community,” concern about not wanting to “be offensive to the cannibal community” and the concern that one “might offend absolutely ANY group of people ANYWHERE.” He has ridiculed “Catholics offended by the term ‘San Diego Padres,’” communists offended by the term “Cincinnati Reds,” and orcas who “find the term ‘killer whale’ to be offensive and demeaning.” He has had a character declare, “The depiction of a howling coyote is demeaning and offensive!” Another declares, “I can’t believe it. I’ve inadvertently made a remark that could possibly be offensive to some racial, ethnic, gender, or other community with the word ‘community’ after its name.” Therefore, let the community of “Christian T.V. viewers” get in line. Also, it is again reassuring to know that Tinsley himself approves of the methods employed by this writer.

In the cartoon of 3/23/06, Mallard approves of one who “throws decorum out the window.” This presumably includes offensive speech.

On his television program 3/29/06, Sean Hannity found reason to complain about vicious Democratic rhetoric. When told of a death threat received by a Democrat, his dismissive response was, “It goes with the territory,” as does being corrected by this writer when one underperforms him.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 6/7/06, Jonathan Zimmerman observes that conservatives condemn postmodernist relativism when it is applied to history. “Because one theory was as good as another,” say conservatives about how things changed in the 1960s, “then nothing could be true or false.” If conservatives do not believe in the arbitrary equality of theories, then let

them celebrate the acknowledgment of the inferiority of creationism. As Zimmerman says, “[M]ay the best story win.” Creationism depends on relativism for its survival, and creationists are as deserving of conquest, involuntary correction and improvement as any aboriginal people ever colonially subjugated. Those who do not like it may remember that Ann Coulter says, “No one likes to be lectured by victims.”

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 6/8/06, Jonah Goldberg writes, “The Danish cartoon controversy was a perfect example of appeasement. A host of Western leaders indulged jihadist outbursts and threats to behead cartoonists and journalists by denouncing, in Bill Clinton’s words, ‘these totally outrageous cartoons against Islam.’ . . . And French President Jacques Chirac tut-tutted that ‘anything liable to offend the beliefs of others, particularly religious beliefs, must be avoided.’”

If appeasement and indulgence are wrong, and offense to religious beliefs is *not* to be avoided, then creationists can likewise lump it, as per conservative standards (John 10:32). Similarly, according to the same conservative standard, Catholic League president William Donohue’s complaints about slurs against Catholicism may (and should) be ignored with impunity. If conservatives condemn compromise, then so be it.

On his radio show, 6/9/06, Rush Limbaugh said, “Liberalism punishes achievement.” If it is wrong (even for conservatives) to punish achievement, then let explanatory superiority be rewarded. Roger Ailes has said, “What people resent deeply out there are those in the ‘blue states’ thinking they’re smarter.” Those who unjustly claim to be smarter may justly be resented. But people who resent those who are demonstrably smarter, regardless of geography or politics, are simply rationalizing by way of a pathological anti-elitism. Let people harboring such resentments excise their own brain tumors, for the intelligentsia may not care to feed the mouth that bites them.

In the cartoon of 6/11/06, Mallard advises, “Students who are fighting speech codes and other forms of censorship can get free help at: [thefire.org](http://thefire.org) and [campusrights.org](http://campusrights.org).” As Mallard opposes censorship, he reaffirms that offendees can lump it, according to conservatives.

In the cartoon of 6/23/06, Mallard says, “CBS News reporter Scott Pelley has likened global-warming skeptics to holocaust deniers! . . . thereby raising the question of who should be most offended: people skeptical of ‘man-made’ global warming, people offended by trivialization of the holocaust or people who still think that most reporters are ‘objective.’” The first group has no grounds for offense until they are singled out, which Mallard fails to do when he initially refers merely to global warming per se and not its cause. The second group has no grounds for offense until it can be shown that the consequences of global warming cannot be as great as the holocaust. Further, holocaust denial concerns grounds for belief and doubt, and has nothing to do with the severity of the atrocity. Finally, the concept of objectivity is no more applicable to cartoonists than to reporters. Sadly, poor little Mallard appears to believe that somewhere in his observation he has actually made a point. As to being offended, Tinsley regularly ridicules those who strive not to offend. Therefore, any offense by any of the groups he names is to be disregarded *according to him*.

In the cartoon of 8/20/06, a professor is satirized for saying, “Thou shalt not say anything that might offend any group that might be offended by what you said.” Mallard then observes, “See?! There’s still religious education at public universities!” which is a non sequitur. Again, Mallard defends this writer’s right to offend him.

In the cartoon of 8/24/06, Mallard offers another back-to-school tip: “Don’t wear a pro-American t-shirt to school. In some districts, this can get you suspended for offending the anti-

American community!” No less absurd would be concern about offending the anti-logic community. Also at risk for offense would be the pro-school uniform community, to which a great many conservatives belong.

In the cartoon of 8/31/06, “anti-Christian slurs” are mentioned. *Slur* is perhaps a misnomer when the accusation is factual. Let conservatives apologize for antiscience slurs that are counterfactual. Mallard says, “This has been a public service from ‘People Who Hate Double-Standards in the Media.’” A character then says, “See?! Mallard’s a hater!” If Mallard hates double-standards, then he has no grounds for complaint when he is criticized for implementing them. And if Mallard is not “a hater,” then neither is this writer.

In the cartoon of 10/3/06, a professor is ridiculed for liking it when “campus speech codes” are not violated.

In the cartoon of 10/4/06, it is reported, “The turnip who’s been admitted to U.C. Berkeley is taking the mandatory freshman tolerance-diversity orientation.” A student asks, “Um, what do we *call* him?” The professor answers, “Ahem! ‘Him’ may be offensive! It appears to be a member of the ‘gender neutral’ community!” It is no less of a joke when creationists are offended by being recognized as losers. They themselves appear to be members of the quality neutral community. And if diversity is not to be tolerated, then losers walk.

In the cartoon of 10/9/06, Mallard reports, “Three weeks after the Pope’s remarks, they’re *still* rioting, burning the Pope in effigy, and chanting anti-Christian slogans . . . in the newsroom at the New York Times.” If, as Mallard repeatedly asserts, so many “communities” are wrong to take offense, then let not the Christian community be offended either. In the *Prickly City* cartoon of the same day (10/9/06), Winslow says, “So Bill Clinton pitches a total hissy fit and the Democratic faithful love it?” Carmen replies, “Yep.” Winslow says, “There’s a reason they don’t get to sit at the big people’s table, huh?” Carmen says, “Yep.” Regardless of whether the absence of hissy fits is necessary, it is not sufficient. An oak tree deserves no place at the table in spite of being well-behaved. Respect and merit accrue *pro rata*. Let not creationists sit at the big people’s table until they demonstrate big people’s intellect.

In the cartoon of 10/10/06, Mallard says, “I find myself *agreeing* with the people who say that the president should stop using the term ‘Islamofascists’ to refer to Islamic terrorists, though I’m having trouble deciding whether he should replace it with ‘Islamobombers,’ ‘Islamomurderers’ or ‘Islamobeheaders.’” Let not creationists be offended by eponymy as it applies to them.

In the cartoon of 10/11/06, Mallard thinks, “Lots of prominent Democrats and liberals want the president to stop using the term ‘Islamofascists.’ It’s not clear whether they’re afraid of *offending terrorists* or are just mad that he stole their reflexive word for anyone who disagrees with them.” Creationists are therefore to be offended fearlessly and are to abstain from unjust reflexivity with respect to their opponents, especially their superiors.

In the cartoon of 10/12/06, Mallard reports, “We interrupt your regular program to bring you this breaking news bulletin. For the past 14 minutes, *no* Muslims *anywhere* have been ‘outraged’ about *anything*. Never mind.” Let any invalid outrage of creationists be similarly ridiculed.

In the cartoon of 12/2/06, titled “Liberals, the early years,” one dinosaur says to another, “‘Brain the size of a pea.’ If you ask me, that’s just code for speciesism!” Offense taken from the objective observation of the explanatory inferiority of creationism is equally absurd.

In the cartoon of 12/6/06, Mallard continues with his “most ‘tolerant,’ ‘diverse,’ ‘inclusive,’ and politically correct ‘holiday card’ yet,” which reads, “In conclusion, this card

covers all of the bases! (The secular, sacred, and most other cases.) It's 'all things to all people,' which, as you're aware, means it's 'nothing to anyone'! Why should *I* care? When a glance at our culture (quick or intensive) shows the best of all virtues is to be 'inoffensive.'" Similarly, science does what is best and right, and properly leaves creationists to lump it. Coincidentally, even conservatives like Tinsley explicitly support this position by satirizing diplomatic pandering intended to avoid offense. Offended or not, losers walk.

In the 9 *Chickweed Lane* cartoon of 12/12/06, Dr. Burber says, "I met a former student of mine. She's now a vet. She says she owes what she has become to me. She says I ran all over substandard work with hobnailed boots, and it made her rise to the challenge. She made me realize that, after all, I did something worthwhile here." In the cartoon of the following day (12/13/06), the concept of "grade entitlement" is rejected. Accordingly, the message of this writer to potentially offended creationists is: "You're welcome." Promotion is a privilege, not a right, in spite of any liberal sense of entitlement held by creationists.

In the cartoon of 12/29/06, Mallard offers a New-Year's resolution for college administrators, with one such person saying, "I resolve to keep censoring speech that could be offensive to me, minorities, vegans or Marxists, or any group that is 'P.C.'!" Neither should offense to creationists be impeded. If, by contrast, Mallard welcomes offense to *him*, then this writer will feel even less hesitant to express himself freely. Or, more personally, "You're welcome." Ironically, this cartoon comes only one day after Mallard's New-Year's resolution for Nancy Pelosi, in which she says, "I resolve not to be like the G.O.P., which tried to 'reach out' and remain 'bipartisan,' while my party's style is to go for the jugular vein." Therefore, according to Mallard, students and academicians are to be offensive but Democrats are not.

In the cartoon of 12/31/06, Mallard goes "out on a limb!" in offering his "2007 New-Year's predictions," which read, "The term 'happy New Year' will become as politically incorrect as 'merry Christmas,'" as a character says, "It isn't 'New Year' in everyone's culture, you Neanderthal!" "Likewise, Valentine's Day's name will change from a potentially offensive Christian reference to 'Forcing Guys to Shop in Places They'd Never be Caught Dead in Day.' Sensing the trend, St. Patrick's Day will change its name to 'Day of Intoxicated Tolerance.'" It is no less absurd to heed any offense arising from the acknowledgment of the explanatory inferiority of creationism.

In the cartoon of 1/7/07, Mallard goes "out on a limb" in making "2007 New-Year's predictions," including, "Hollywood will continue to mock 'family values.' Meanwhile, researchers will finally discover a Hollywood celebrity's kid who isn't messed up and in rehab. Tomorrow-night's NCAA championship game will decide, once and for all, unequivocally, without a doubt, that the 'BCS' system was conceived by chimpanzees. The chimpanzee community will be outraged at this assertion." "Messed up" evangelical preachers are equally worthy of derision. The system of theory evaluation employed by creationists is the product of idiots or willful deceivers. However, according to Mallard, creationists (and perhaps the cartoonist community) are no more entitled to outrage than are chimpanzees. Therefore, there will be no liberal attempt to bolster their self-esteem artificially. Such liberal behavior is, amusingly, known among conservatives, for as noted in the *Doonesbury* cartoon of 1/13/07, "The Grand Canyon Park Service is not allowed to tell visitors the geologic age of the canyon for fear of offending creationists!" If all the various communities ridiculed by Tinsley *are* to be offended, then so are creationists. They, like all the groups cited by Tinsley, can lump it.

On his radio show 1/11/07, Rush Limbaugh, giving an example of “guilt-ridden political correctness,” said that wanting your enemies to like you was absurd. The goal of science is to be right, not liked.

In the cartoon of 1/24/07, Mallard says, “The Chinese health ministry reports that a ‘shocking’ epidemic of obesity has hit China’s young people.” The cartoon then reads, “We interrupt this comic strip to inform you that due to politically correct outrage at any generic cartoon depictions of non-caucasians, the part of the fat Chinese kid will be played by Rex Morgan, M.D.” Let there neither be any politically correct conservative outrage at any generic depictions of non-intellectuals, creationists or idiots of any kind.

In the cartoon of 4/14/07, Mallard says, “A brief reminder to all of you who keep e-mailing me to ask, ‘How can we pay for things without raising taxes?!’ J.F.K., Reagan, and this president all increased tax revenue by cutting tax rates!! Idiots. You can’t stop ’em; you can only hope to contain ’em.” The same holds true for those who are idiots with respect to science and logic.

The cartoon of 4/16/07 reads, “Warning: This week’s cartoons contain the classic cartoon image of people with tin cups, who have been called, depending on the fashion of the day, bums, beggars, panhandlers or street persons,” whereupon one such person says, “That’s ‘persons of street-ness’!” This writer is happy to follow Mallard’s lead in rejecting euphemisms regarding creationism, which must beg for liberal something-for-nothing favors in order to survive.

In the cartoon of 6/21/07, Mallard reports, “On the heels of research blaming cow emissions for higher ‘greenhouse gas’ levels, come new studies touting cow manure as a plentiful source of renewable fuel. The cow community has reacted with embarrassment to all such studies, and refuses to dignify them with a response.” The idiot community does not know enough to be embarrassed.

In the cartoon of 1/15/09, Mallard’s “New-Year’s Prediction” is that words such as “Bigfoot” and “Sasquatch” “will be revealed to be terms that could possibly be offensive to the big, hairy, imaginary creature community.” Equally imaginary is the explanatory utility of creationism.

Whatever may be wrong with merely *acting* superior, *being* superior and even celebrating it is not elitist *according to conservatives*, as expressed in the cartoon of 2/1/05). In the cartoon of 1/2/[year uncertain], as a caveman is being eaten, a “liberal” asks that we “try to understand the saber-toothed tiger’s point of view.” Such a point of view may be irrelevant ethically, but ethological disinterest constitutes unpraiseworthy ignorance, which does not deserve celebration.

The cartoon of 1/17 [year uncertain] ridicules one caveman for calling another “a right-wing spear-nut!” If it is not shameful to wield a spear for the purpose of survival, then it is no less honorable to wield logic for the purpose of knowledge acquisition. By contrast, killer whales are apparently not to be euphemized, given that in a cartoon of uncertain date one says, “We’re called orcas now. We find the term ‘killer whale’ to be offensive and demeaning.” Those slaughterers of logic who are otherwise known as creationists deserve no more courtesy than whales.

Mallard has said [in a cartoon of uncertain date] that his mission is to “speak truth to power.” Let him also respect the speaking of truth to inferiority. If being offended is so shameful, as Tinsley so often asserts, then let no offense be taken, whether or not intended. Any perceived insensitivity or intolerance of folly should be compared to the constant negative campaigning against science coming from the pulpit, as for example that of the late televangelist D. James

Kennedy in such sermons as that of 4/25/99. By condoning such attacks on science, conservatives routinely demonstrate the pluralistic tolerance of the pot calling the sugar black.

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 3/23/07, Carmen comments on apparently contradictory magazine covers that deal with climate change by saying, “Perhaps Sports Illustrated ought to stick to, you know . . . sports.” Some conservatives contend that science cannot be left even to scientists.

Laura Ingraham wrote a book entitled *Shut Up and Sing: How Elites From Hollywood, Politics and the U.N. Are Subverting America*. Subversion of the inferior is the duty of civilization. According to Ingraham’s conservative standard, let conservative nonelites, nonpoliticians and nonscientists “Shut Up and Plow.” If offended by this command, then they should either take it up with Laura Ingraham, or offer some service beyond that of farming. If they cannot, then their offense is unprincipled and groundless, and they themselves are demanding something-for-nothing, no-losers liberalism. While on the topic of books, Mike Gallagher wrote one titled *Surrounded by Idiots: Fighting Liberal Lunacy in America*. Conservative idiots and lunacy are no less plentiful. Michael Savage wrote a book titled *Liberalism is a Mental Disorder: Savage Solutions*. This may be true with respect to politics. With respect to science, it appears to be the reverse.

If creationists dislike a lack of respect, then let them earn some. In the meantime, let them not be the sort “weenies” as are denounced in the cartoon of 3/8/05. Let them, as they would say, “turn the other cheek,” put on their big-boy pants, grow a pair and man up.

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Conservatives mock concern for the effect that offense might have on self-esteem. Let not the basis of their own self-esteem go uncriticized.

In a *Los Angeles Times* commentary, 2/10/05, William Ecenbarger writes, “losing can be . . . ennobling if it compels us to examine why we lost.” Let creationists thus ennoble themselves.

In the cartoon of 3/7/05, Mallard reports that “the ‘self-esteem’ emphasis in our society” may be counterproductive. This is hardly surprising, coming as it does from one who does less than he could to earn it for himself. He suggests the result of this emphasis has been “ignorant, thin-skinned” people. In Mallard’s case, his skin must necessarily remain sufficiently thin to allow him a daily topic on which to write. As for ignorance, not even Mallard is perfect.

In the cartoon of 3/8/05, Mallard cites with seeming approval a study suggesting “that a society that doesn’t challenge kids, or correct them when they’re wrong, or flunk them when they fail, because it might hurt their ‘self-esteem’ creates a generation of lazy, ignorant, thin-skinned, weak-willed weenies!” In accordance with Mallard’s own views, having asked for it, and accommodately ratifying his own eating of this writer’s dust, the only response due him is, “You’re welcome.” Being lazy or thin-skinned is secondary to being wrong, and people should be flunked whenever they are wrong, regardless of the psychological outcome. Conversely, winners should be supported, lauded and rewarded.

In the cartoon of 3/18/05, Bruce Tinsley’s Self-Esteem Guy would revise the NCAA basketball tournament such that “there’d be a big ceremony, in which every team would be declared the champion, and get a great big trophy, whether they were ‘any good’ or not!” Neither should theories get “equal time” just for showing up and regardless of quality.

In the cartoon of 3/19/05, Mallard asks the Self-Esteem Guy, “So you want to change the NCAA tournament so that no team ever loses?” He answers, “Exactly. They wouldn’t even keep score, so no team’s self-esteem is diminished!” Whatever the effect on self-esteem, when score is kept, arithmetic quantifies creationism’s loss.

In the cartoon of 3/20/05, the same old joke returns, though Tinsley does manage to give the guy a name, Tyler, who says, “I wasn’t corrected when I was wrong, admonished when I was lazy or flunked when I failed.” Again, as long as Tinsley perpetuates the joke, this writer can only say to him, “You are welcome.”

In the cartoon of 3/27/05, a character being ridiculed says, “I have issues with pressure, criticism, and hard work. My schools didn’t believe in that stuff! They thought those things might hurt our self-esteem!” Unless he wishes to mock himself, neither should Tinsley have issues with criticism.

The cartoon of 4/11/06, titled “Mallard’s more-relevant school bumper sticker #18,” reads, “Because of grade inflation, almost *ANYONE* can be An HONOR-ROLL STUDENT at My Kid’s School,” as can any theory among those who cannot distinguish science from a hole in the ground.

The cartoon of 4/19/06, titled “Mallard’s more-relevant school bumper sticker #20,” reads, “I have hie self esteem at Kennedy Middle School.” Creationism similarly provides self-esteem to intellectual failures, and little else.

On the website “Darleen’s Place: Politics, parenting and other prattlings,” the posting of 11/26/07, titled “Nanny State: zero tolerance, word inflation and 30 is the new 17,” includes the following: “Current parents are now trying to spare their children even the pressure of achieving. From ‘no score’ sports, to ‘no grading’ report cards, to ‘no valedictorians,’ to ‘everyone gets a trophy’ the movement to cocoon children and adults from the merest disappointment in life is endemic.” Let conservatives know better than to complain when disappointment happens to them. It is not unfair to exclude bad football players from the Pro Bowl. The stage of the Metropolitan Opera is not available to bad singers on demand. Casualties of such triage must realize that such institutions are entitled to enforce their standards. In science, scores and grades happen. If conservatives espouse personal responsibility (Galatians 6:4), then let them accept the impartial judgments of arithmetic.

A cartoon of uncertain date ends with a voice saying, “This message was funded by the Institute to Help Celebrities Feel Good About Themselves, . . . .” Nor should idiots be offered any such help.

Examples could continue, but the point is made.

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Declension of intellectual standards is not a concern, but a *fait accompli*. Fermi’s question “Where are they?” may be applied to intellectuals. For Jean-Paul Sartre, hell is other people, while, according to Sébastien-Roch Nicolas Chamfort, “A man must swallow a toad every morning if he wishes to be sure of finding nothing still more disgusting before the day is over.” To paraphrase Dostoyevsky, man may be defined as the unrelentingly disappointing biped, hence this writer’s well-earned misanthropy (*odi profanum vulgus*)(*hinc illæ lacrimæ*). Given the ubiquity and intractability of stupidity, what is to be done? A word to the wise is sufficient.



Society pretends to demand high educational standards, but prefers its children to be stupid, deriving amusement from juvenile stupidity. By contrast, this writer has since childhood felt insulted by every child-related sign that features a reversed letter, and repays society by deducting for every split infinitive and dangled preposition committed by an adult, such that their failings may be similarly exploited for comic amusement (*quid pro quo*).

Civilization happens, but it has never been popular, and its implementation is very sparse and diffuse. Most people survive without even an emergency credential for civilization, being satisfied with subsistence-level reasoning. Rush Limbaugh once referred to something as “the unfortunate result of too many people with too much time on their hands.” Such could be said of civilization by those rationalizing their lack of it.

In the *Prickly City* cartoon of 4/28/06 (among others), “the coarsening of our culture” is bemoaned. Of course, it was Vice President Dick Cheney who told Vermont Senator Patrick Leahy on the Senate floor, “Go [expletive deleted] yourself.” Society’s logical coarsening is equally regrettable. Thus does this writer engage in *Kulturkampf* against the degradation of education via “junk science.” He is grateful for the comic fodder provided to him, but lends neither aid nor comfort to the enemies of logic, to say nothing of grammar.

Dennis Prager is credited with saying that we live in a time when condemning evil is often considered worse than committing it. Many conservatives consider the condemnation of theism to be worse than the logical evil of committing it. They thus defend value judgments yet seem not to know how to make them correctly. Thus do they fail to protect the sanctity of logic and seek to compromise the logical integrity of science.

Conservatives do not consistently realize that those who establish such a template forfeit their right to complain about being held to it. Thus do they sometimes portray themselves as victims of impartiality. People should at least be held to their own standards (John 10:32), if not to the highest ones. This writer is happy to let conservative principles apply to conservatives. However, far more important than living up to one’s own standards is living up to the right ones. Conservatives whine about immorality as they break the rules of logic and tolerate all manner of logical depravity and barbarity. Bringing criminals to justice should include the denial of social promotion to logical criminals. In culture wars that do not allow for social promotion, people fail at their own peril.

Conservatives complain about the coarsening of the cultural while simultaneously championing forms of explanatory penury that undermine civilization. Ceding the low ground is not rationalization, but a matter of propriety and honor. Borrowing a phrase from Richard Eder, if the game is one of one-downmanship, then this writer happily concedes any race to the bottom. Incidentally, when bemoaning the coarsening of culture by such things as rap music, conservatives typically offer not classical but country music as an alternative, possibly sincerely but perhaps just to gain hick cred. In accordance with conservative opposition to politically correct cultural sensitivity, this writer’s appreciation of classical music leaves even conservative alternatives in the dust.

For many people, ignorance is bliss (*populus vult decipi*). As Samuel Johnson puts it, “He who makes a beast of himself gets rid of the pain of being a man.” It also confers on one the advantage of being readily pardoned, for as Olivia observes in *Twelfth Night* (I.v.), “there is no slander in an allow’d fool.” Academics such as Michael Behe, however, lack the privilege of any such excuse, or at least they should. In the *Los Angeles Times*, 5/24/06, David Eggenschwiler writes, “Ignorance is not only bliss but also patriotism.” It is also orthodoxy, given that the Fall is blamed on illicit knowledge. People take pride in and depend on their errors, and demand for

correctness is not universal. God forbid there should be enforcement of the standards of logic and grammar. Would that people pursued their freedom of logic and ethics as eagerly and diligently as they pursue their freedom of religion.

There is little demand for genuine education. What often passes for education is less about progress than the perpetuation of custom. Education was clearly not the government's goal in the case of Adragon De Mello, who, although he already held a bachelor's degree in computational mathematics from the University of California at Santa Cruz, was told by the government that if he did not immediately enter graduate school he would be forced to attend junior high school because he was only 11.

It is reported in the *Los Angeles Times Science File*, 7/21/07, "A queen bee needs to keep her subjects calm and quiet, and she does so by secreting a scent that prevents worker bees from learning, according to new research." The fear of knowledge leads some humans to try to restrict the academic curriculum. The wife of the bishop of Worcester said of phylogeny (specifically of the relationship of man to the rest of the biota), "Let us hope it is not true. But if it is, let us hope it will not be generally known." Alexander Pope says, "A little learning is a dangerous thing." Nevertheless, education too often seems to be the art of taking advantage of the helplessness of the young in order to achieve institutionally sustained intellectual destitution. Thus is knowledge diligently avoided in the interest of comfort by those afraid to be victimized by reason.

In the cartoon of 11/20/04, it is said, "For years, the data have shown that journalists' positions on major issues are completely different from the average American's!" "Mainstream-media person" replies, "How do I know you're not just *saying* that to flatter us?" This is only a joke to those who celebrate the "average" and the *argumentum ad populum*. Though soft on mediocrity (when not bemoaning it), Bruce Tinsley at least manages, somehow, to know that *data* is plural.

Politicians claim to want a more highly educated work force, but, as cited above, Bruce Tinsley enjoys proclaiming that the work force is seldom willing to oblige. Recall, for example, the cartoon of 8/31/05, in which Mallard reports that "half of Americans can't name the three branches of government."

John Adams wrote in a 1780 letter to Abigail, "I must study politics and war, that our sons may have liberty to study mathematics and philosophy . . . in order to give their children a right to study painting, poetry, music." A distinguished military man (reference now lost) is supposed to have similarly said, "I am a soldier so that my son can be a farmer so that his son can be a poet." If poets and others at the pinnacle of civilization are not valued, then there is little excuse for soldiers.

Savagery is a growth industry, and ignorpreneurship is alive and well among the ignorazzi. As with abstinence-only sex education, knowledge is considered dangerous. However dangerous it may be, it is what permits one to deserve to occupy the executive pole of a dog leash. Those who eschew it may leave it to the civilized and eat their dust. Vulgarly dies hard (*qui a bu boira*), so do not bother trying to kill it. Instead, the proudly savage, who aspire to be no more than highly trained barbarians, should be humored, taught to count to 100 and to read street signs, handed a shovel and directed to dig ditches.

Even a watertight argument may fall on deaf ears. Ludwig Wittgenstein says, "Telling someone something he does not understand is pointless, even if you add that he will not understand it." It would be equally pointless to tell people what they do not *want* to understand. Science is certainly wasted on idiots and pets. However, it is not the fault of a clock if it does not tell time *to a dog*. H.L. Mencken warns never to argue with someone whose job depends on not

being convinced. Further, the insecure often exhibit an aversion to error correction. Even if a silk purse could be made from a sow's ear, the latter might resent the effort. Some people do not even aspire to civilization and would not miss it. Instead, they treasure, cultivate and (in an expression borrowed from Peg Bracken) pool their ignorance. Nevertheless, civilization should not be imposed where it is unwelcome. Once a horse has been led to water, it should be left to its own devices. However, the intellectual cowardice that is so often the basis of its absence should not be abetted. Students are to be sought who pull as the teacher pushes. (In John Boorman's *Excaliber*, Morgana, when told that knowledge would burn and blind her, replies, "Then burn me.") Better still are the autodidactic, who do not wait to be taught, but "Just learn it!" It should also be remembered that the defense of savagery may extend beyond indifference to hostility. In that circumstance, except when necessary, do not feed the mouth that bites you.

One probably does not have the right to correct others against their will, but one *is* entitled to segregate oneself from savagery and barbarism. Robert Frost recognized that good fences make good neighbors. It is better to walk alone than in bad company ("*Assez! Fuyons ces lieux où la parole est vile, la joie ignoble et le geste brutal!*"). No one is, nor could be, forced to believe the teachings of science nor to participate in civilization. However, in the absence of social promotion, tokenism, radical multiculturalism and aggressive affirmative action, the alternative can be summarized in one word: "Fetch!"

Slavery is a condition into which people should not be coerced. Slavery and caste systems present more complicated ethical situations when people enter into them voluntarily. On those who decline civilization, second-class citizenship is totally self-inflicted, however much it may be resented. As long as this dust-eating status is voluntary and self-imposed, then each to his own taste. In the conservative tradition of letting the poor "get a job," let the ignorant take responsibility and get a clue. If "no child" is to be "left behind," then none should deserve to be. In accordance with the conservative preference for retention over social promotion, every child (and adult) should be left behind who fails.

In October, 2005, as reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, a National Academies panel advocated enhanced science education "to secure the country's economic and technological leadership." In the *Prickly City*, cartoon of 4/19/07, according to Carmen, "Character *and* intelligence are the things that matter," rather than "Money, money, money!" Lassie may have earned more money than this writer, but that does not entitle the former to the executive pole of the leash. If merit is not proportional to intelligence, then it is unfair for dog leashes to be polarized.

Intelligence is the most fundamental basis of value, and everything that you do not know counts against you.

It is reported in the *Los Angeles Times*, 3/24/05, "IMAX theaters in several Southern cities have decided not to show a film on volcanoes out of concern that its references to evolution might offend those with fundamentalist religious beliefs. 'We've got to pick a film that's going to sell in our area. If it's not going to sell, we're not going to take it,' said Lisa Buzzelli, director of an IMAX theater in Charleston, S.C., that is not showing the movie. 'Many people here believe in creationism, not evolution.'" Theories, are not to be believed. Rather, they are to be recognized as relatively superior or inferior. As some people do not want to be educated and civilized, there is no cruelty in withholding supply where there is no demand.

In the cartoon of 9/4/05, a character says, "We Hollywood executives give audiences great movies that mock and ridicule their quaint mainstream 'values' . . . and *still* movie attendance is dropping!" Turnabout is fair play. Those who "mock and ridicule" better-than-

mainstream values deserve to be put in their place. When the demand is for entertainment rather than education, merchants are wise to put the hay down where the goats can get it. In terms of education, the standards of the teacher should not be lowered to accommodate the student. Instead, the standards of the student should be raised to those of the teacher *if* such help is appreciated.

In a commentary in the *Los Angeles Times*, 2/7/05, Salman Rushdie writes, “At Cambridge I was taught a laudable method of argument: You never personalize, but you have absolutely no respect for people’s opinions. You are never rude to the person, but you can be savagely rude about what the person thinks.” Accordingly, respect people’s right of free speech and do not stifle them. Instead, rebut their illegitimate, self-undermining concepts (*non quis, sed quid; principia, non homines*). Eradicationism applies properly to propositions and not to people. (Attendance to *what* rather than *who* also applies to the anonymity of this writer. Readers caring about who he is are simply being denied the opportunity to commit the folly of the *argumentum ad hominem*. Let them show their stupidity elsewhere.)

Admirably modest ambition is demonstrated by an institution in Los Angeles that holds the title of “The Museum of” neither acceptance nor approval, but “Tolerance.” Though many people deserve much more than mere tolerance, it is applicable (and occasionally expedient) at least when no grounds exist for respect.

Pope Benedict XVI says in *Dominus Jesus* not to respect other people’s religion. Given this papal warrant, differences are to be tolerated, but not necessarily respected. Intolerance *per se* is acceptable, but not irrational, prejudicial, clinically significant intolerance. The assertions of science are based on logic, which, by definition, cannot be topped.

Civilization tolerates no compromise with falsehood (*amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*), and gluttony is a sin only with respect to food, not knowledge. But some people value order, comfort and peace above truth. Diplomacy is a necessity, but social promotion should not be offered to those whose noses bleed when they stand on the shoulders of giants. Intellectual frailty, disability and cowardice may have to be tolerated and accommodated but should be neither encouraged nor rewarded. And just as tolerance should not be confused with acceptance or approval, neither should it degenerate into appeasement. The *mission civilizatrice* notwithstanding, the altruistic, paternalistic largesse of rescue against the will of the beneficiary has its limits and should perhaps be reserved for veterinarians. The lower intellectual stratum of society should be tolerated, at least until robots replace them in the labor force, and perhaps even after that.

Creationists have been accused of wanting to “take us back to the dark ages.” Any such people are allowed to go there themselves, but they have no right to impede the progress of others. People are at liberty to abstain from civilization, but not to disrupt it. (David Mamet attributes to William Hazlitt the view that the greatest test of superiority is never to be upset by impertinence.) Those who cannot stand the heat of civilization should get out of the way of those who can. Progress should not be slowed in order to accommodate the unaspiring. Instead, one should advance and neither retreat (*vestigia nulla retrorsum*) nor bother waiting for others to catch up. It has been asked, “Can you be sensitive and tolerant to their very deep moral feelings?” Yes, to a certain extent, but not at the expense of civilization.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 7/24/05, William H. Deaver, commenting on a book review by James D. Squires, writes, “As long as liberals continue to characterize those who disagree with them with words like ‘moronization,’ . . . they will continue their self-marginalization.” It is stupidity, not contrariness, that constitutes “moronization” and earns

disqualification. However, the genuinely stupid are often found rationalizing their failures as “disagreements” and then whining when they are denied social promotion. The true intellectual elite shun the *argumentum ad populum* and welcome their “marginalization.” In another letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 7/24/05, Mike Burns writes of how liberals “feel good about themselves for being ‘compassionate.’” If those liberals are intelligent, then they should, instead, relish the denial of social promotion to their inferiors. Meanwhile, conservatives seem to “feel good” when they brag about their charity, as did Dennis Prager on his radio program 7/12/07. (Given that Prager has disavowed bragging, perhaps it should simply be said that he made the observation with obvious and explicit approval and pride.) Prager may deny bragging, but his statements have little other use if he believes that giving is better than not.

In the cartoon of 10/20/05, Mallard says to his creator, “Okay, so stamp prices are going up again. But every time you make fun of the post office, you get all those e-mails from people calling you ‘mean-spirited’!” The response is: “Yeah. A lot of the same folks who think I care too much about the unborn think I don’t have enough compassion for federal agencies.” The soft-minded and uneducated deserve compassion, but not approval.

In the Prickly City cartoon of 3/13/07, Winslow says, “You gotta admit, Carmen, that liberals are the most tolerant.” Carmen replies, “Oh, no I don’t, Winslow.” Winslow then says, “That’s ‘cause you’re a racist, sexist, homophobic, right-wing religious fascist!” This is a perfectly fine joke as long as it discourages the inference that the qualities listed *are* to be tolerated. Logic is a doctrine to which not all subscribe, and is a virtue wanting among the intellectually indigent. Whether or not any particular person is an idiot, logical malefactors who are seldom and only opportunistically given to logic are merely to be tolerated, and neither accepted nor granted social promotion. However, if not allowed to showcase their ignorance with unearned swagger, then terrorists win.

An editorial in the *Los Angeles Times*, 3/15/07, states that the American Humanist Assn. holds that “most Americans wrongly think that atheists are anti-theists: people who not only don’t believe but also object to others’ belief in God(s).” Objection to the belief is the proper stance, just as Jerry Fallwell hated homosexuality but loved homosexuals. On the personal level, however, it is the Bible that advocates segregation (II Corinthians 6:14), though its labels of “righteousness and wickedness” would seem to be misapplied.

Peter Weisbach, substituting for Michael Medved on the latter’s radio program, 9/27/07, observed that even if gays are hated in America, they are executed in Iran. It should therefore be equally satisfying for creationists that even in the face of disparagement, American creationists go unexecuted. In other words, “You’re welcome,” marginalization being preferable to extinction.

Paula Penn-Nabrit, in her book *Morning by Morning: How We Home-Schooled Our African-American Sons to the Ivy League*, writes, “True intelligence . . . is what allows people to navigate the life process successfully. . . . Academic achievement merely allows people to perform well in school.” The former is available to all species, while the latter is autapomorphically human.

Maintenance is necessary but not sufficient. Let it be delegated to Philistines while the rest of us achieve progress.

Hendrik Hertzberg writes of William F. Buckley Jr. in the *New Yorker*, “[H]e did his best to purge the right of anti-Semitism, overt racism, xenophobia, philistinism and anti-intellectualism.” As to the last two, his best was not remotely sufficient. Anti-intellectuals want the inmates to run asylum, which will not do. Some say to nerds, “Get a life.” Nerds not only

have a life, they have a human life, whereas people who are not living the life of the mind are not exploiting their human potential and could be just as far ahead if they were dogs. Concerns of food, sleep and sex may exhaust the potential of a dog, but not of a human. Ignorance should be reserved for dogs, where it will not disappoint.

As demonstrated by the reaction to Sputnik 1, nerds are regarded as opportunistic tools whose wonkery is tolerated by the masses only because of the technology, prestige and money it can provide. Intellectual work is delegated to scientist who produce answers that are then often rejected. As Baltasar Gracián observes, “Hope has a good memory, gratitude a bad one.” Even if evolutionists are made to feel themselves to be disaffected political outsiders, it is sufficient for them to be intellectual superiors. If punk rock is a way for ugly kids to be popular, then perhaps creationism is a similar refuge for those lacking the intellect to participate in science. There nevertheless exists the possibility of mutual accommodation between grunts and the civilized. After all, farmers farm for money, not out of altruism.

Beasts of burden are owed a debt of gratitude. At the end of the day, however, they are left in the yard or in the barn, and not invited into the house. It would be a similar waste of time to invite fools to a feast that they would not appreciate. They are to be left aside, in the wake of civilization, which is to be left to the civilized. Let lie not only sleeping dogs but also complacently satisfied ones (*noli irritare leones*).

Conservatives deride the liberal culture of relativism and compromise. Lack of compromise by those who are wrong allows the persistence of error. If people persist in error, then set them adrift. “He who reasons is lost,” writes Holbrook Jackson, to which G.K. Chesterton replies, “He who never reasons is not worth finding.” However, as certain fools (*id genus omne*) might be anthropologically missed, they perhaps should be preserved, but not at all costs. Room in the lifeboat is perhaps to be found for them, but only at the convenience and sufferance of their superiors, on whose patience they presume.

Limousine liberals are said not to care about Joe Sixpack. Benignancy should not extend to allowing the civilized to be dragged down to a lower level (*amicus Plato, sed magis amica veritas*). It would be criminal to allow truth to be impeded by fools. Let fools get with the program or get out of the way. You snooze, you lose. Holders of inferior theories should be viewed with amused detachment (*ride si sapias*). Pass them by and never look back, except for a laugh (*plus on est de fous, plus on rit*), for it is only in the roll of a jester that a fool can keep rubbernecking from being a waste time.

In the cartoon of 11/12/04, a character asks of “folks in ‘middle America,’” “What do they know?” Those folks are seldom shy about specifying what they neither know nor *want* to know.

In the cartoon of 8/30/05, “constructive engagement” with China is ridiculed. Similarly, creationists, having failed to earn adequate intellectual credentials, do not deserve to be invited to the party.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 9/22/05, Albert Jakobsen refers to NASA sending a “toy” into space. He says that many NASA projects “serve no practical purpose for the general public, even though the American taxpayers have to foot the bill.” If such ingratitude and disinterest in knowledge are typical of “the general public,” then perhaps they should be left to treat their own diseases.

Jerry Van Amerongen’s *Ballard Street* cartoon of 9/23/05 shows a dog at the wheel of a car that has just backed into a tree. The caption reads, “Chuck should never have tried to teach Chester to drive.” Rather than try to teach a pig to fly, get a bird.

In the cartoon of 10/30/05, Mallard is bothered by “little girls idolizing women whose only ambition is bagging a prince.” Many people aspire to a status no higher than that of pets, to the amusement of their intellectual superiors.

The *Ballard Street* cartoon of 3/24/07 is captioned, “Neal is pleased to find something he can do that his dog, Rocky, can’t.” Higher status than that of dogs is earned by outperforming dogs, even if doing so is considered hubris in certain quarters. Apathy with respect to civilization is just one more symplesiomorphy shared with dogs and trees (*Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur*), and simply provides that much more room at the top. Let such plesiomorphs fetch for the rest of us. As Epictetus says, “Only the educated are free.”

In the *Los Angeles Times Book Review*, 7/20/08, Gideon Lewis-Kraus writes, “As the burden of the novelist is to give her readers reason to keep reading, the burden of the untethered critic (as opposed to the academic one, whose authority is institutionally granted) is to offer enough gratuitous pleasure and intelligence that he is taken seriously.” The gratuitous pleasure offered by fools consists in the opportunity to take one’s own intelligence seriously by comparison. Let civilized people exploit every opportunity to relish the thrill of victory. Arnold Schwarzenegger once asked, “Why would I listen to losers?” One reason would be to delight in a laugh at their expense.

As illustrated by the human/dog polarity of leashes, rank has its privileges, especially rank unassailably conferred by arithmetic. This is acknowledged, though opportunistically, even by conservatives. Leashes are for dogs and others who require restraint, not for those who have earned their way to the executive pole.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 11/5/04, Frank Pastore writes, “The left bewitches with its potions and elixirs, served daily in its strongholds of academe, Hollywood and old media. It vomits upon the morals, values and traditions we hold sacred: God, . . .” Those on the right at least appreciate that God alone constrains their savagery. The holding of something sacred by others is no grounds for social promotion, while the upward-looking snobbery of the pot calling the sugar black is good only for a laugh.

In the *Los Angeles Times*, 12/1/05, Jonah Goldberg writes, “What I think secularists don’t appreciate is how unfair this feels to religious people who believe that the secularists have, for all intents and purposes, a moral faith of their own.” What may feel unfair is not necessarily so. What is actually unfair is the social promotion of those who “believe” incorrectly. Being wrong should have its cost. Failure should produce adverse consequences.

In a letter to the *Los Angeles Times*, 12/24/05, Clint Sadler writes of “Christians weary of being relegated to the land of the naive non-thinker.” Only the self-relegated deserve to be, like those who “choose to believe” but try to defend their choice invalidly. Creationists want to avoid being politically unfavored outcasts, but their intellectual inferiority invites and justifies it. Conservatives report that “communism was thrown onto the ash heap of history,” as should everything that deserves it.

As an alternative to what he calls the “pseudo-sophistication” of *Syriana*, Max Boot, writing in the *Los Angeles Times*, 12/28/05, seems to prefer the absence of all sophistication, pseudo- or otherwise. Given that he also acknowledges the need for “violence to defeat barbarians,” he had best choose sides with the utmost care.

In the *Non Sequitur* cartoon of 12/28/05 by Wiley Miller, titled “Life on the Moral High Ground,” an occupant of that position celebrates that fact that “you can crush everyone from here.” Given the equivalence of logic and ethics, to the victor go the spoils (*palnam qui meruit ferat*).

In a cartoon of uncertain date, Mallard thinks, “If I put up ‘Old Glory’ this year for Independence Day, I wonder if some people will think I’m a jingoistic ‘flag-waver,’ or a moral absolutist who thinks in terms of ‘good’ and ‘evil,’ or that I think my country is ‘better’ than all others, or that I see the terrorist attacks as a simple matter of ‘us vs them.’ I sure hope so.” Logic is tautologically better than all alternatives, and is absolutely good. Let “us” employ it and let all “them” eat our dust, which they agree to do, at least until they flip-flop and accept the concept of social promotion. Also, Mallard often seems to think that his country is *not* better in terms of the performance of its students and government.

The eating of intellectual dust is amusing to witness, but is otherwise inexcusable. So, whereas compassion may be felt for those who depend on the emperor’s new clothes, no intellectual compromise is permissible in accommodating such people, as per the Prager Doctrine that compassion should not override standards. As Friedrich Nietzsche advises, “He whom you cannot teach to fly, teach to fall faster!”

Even though Seneca proclaims, “There is nothing the wise man does reluctantly,” barbarians are dangerous when moved to contempt, so caution is advisable. “It is impossible to carry the torch of truth through a crowd without singeing someone’s beard,” observes Georg Christoph Lichtenberg. “All victories breed hate,” warns Baltasar Gracián. “Speak not in the ears of a fool: for he will despise the wisdom of thy words,” advises Solomon in Proverbs 23:9. “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you,” counsels Jesus in Matthew 7:6. Before attempting to initiate a Socratic dialogue, look where that got Socrates, cautions Brooke McEldowney. In *The Merchant of Venice* (IV.I.), Shylock asks, “What judgement shall I dread, doing no wrong?” The judgment to be dreaded is misjudgment. Since comity is not guaranteed, the cognoscenti are safer when they narrowcast among themselves and resort to covert autodidactic education in defensive anonymity. Also, wisdom is more safely embodied in a sophisticated form such as opera where the dregs are unlikely to encounter it.

In the *Dilbert* cartoon of 12/10/05, character named Sourpuss says, “People say the glass is half full. But they don’t say of what.” On the intellectual landscape, consolation may be taken from the fact that the glass is 1% full rather than 99% empty. Thus, even though, as James Thurber observes, “You can fool too many people too much of the time,” there may yet be cause for modest optimism (*solvitur ambulando*). If not, then the most must be made of fatalism. “Enjoy yourself because you can’t change anything anyway,” advises Jenny Holzer. In the *Dilbert* cartoon of 3/13/07, Wally advises, “The sooner you learn to think of other people as noisy furniture, the sooner you will be happy.”